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"'CAPTING SAM JOHNSON, TER COME ABOAF
SKIPPER SHOUTED"

TO THE CREDIT OF THE SEA

LAWRENCE MOTT
AUTHOR OF
"JULES OF THE GREAT HEART"
"THE WHITE DARKNESS"

ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK AND LONDON
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TO

MY FATHER

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TO THE CREDIT OF THE SEA

TO THE CREDIT OF THE SEA

I

A FURIOUS surf beat on the Labrador coast with heavy crashings and long-drawn rolls, like that of distant drums. The northeast gale hurled itself spitefully at the low, wild lands, hissing and yowling across the tundra, shrieking spasmodically when some miserable, stunted bush or tree stood in its way.

At the mouth of the Forteau River the monster combers rushed towards the bar foaming, their gray-crested heads high, undersides dark-green and sullen.

The little group of fishermen's houses stood forlorn, apparently forsaken, trembling at each whining blast. Evening was coming; already

the shores of Newfoundland, ten miles away, were fading, sinking into nothingness, and the white wastes of angry peaks between became whiter, and seemed to run more viciously.

As the sun set, pale-yellow and small, its last feeble rays flickering with chilling effect on the fierce storm scene, a woman came out of one of the houses. She clutched a shawl about her head, endeavoring to stand against the strength of the blow. With keen, eager eyes she stared out past the long Point, where the spray tossed and drifted in clouds.

"He baint comen' yit," she muttered; "zure 'tis a bad breeze!"

She worked her way to a pile of lobster-traps and crouched behind them, watching, unconsciously listening to the weird whistlings of the wind among the laths and nettings. Darker and darker it became, until she could not see the Point, strain as she would. The towering breakers stormed at her feet, coming out of the gloom at terrible speed, falling shattered and helpless on the bar.

Then it was night. The seas rose up tow-

ards her, looming with snarls and curlings for an instant. She could not see their end on the bar; but the sound was intensified, and she shivered.

"Tide's a-raisin'!" she said, then, as the tumult grew less and less out in the blackness.

No star sparkled in the high heavens; nothing there but swiftly moving masses of cloud, that tumbled and rolled and twisted over one another in their mad rush.

"Him an' Joe 'll got ter mind out this night!" She drew the shawl closer about her throat, waiting; undisturbed by the edge of frost bitterness in the wind. "They be thar'!" she called to herself, standing up in her excitement, as from the impenetrable darkness, out of the noises of the angry sea, a tiny light appeared, far away. Up and down and sideways it bobbed and lurched, sometimes vanishing entirely, then climbing up and up until almost a star on the low horizon. She watched the nearing boat intently, fearing to lose the light. It came on steadily, shaking to and fro, stagger-

ing, slanting in course away from her. She looked over her shoulder:

"T'light es—!"

A gasp of surprise; the window next the sea was dark.

"What 'ave 'un done?" she screamed, the sound whirled away as her lips moved. Stumbling, falling to her knees over driftwood and stones, she reached the house. "To'mie, what 'ave 'un done?"

Silence, but for the yelling drone of the wind around the building. She caught sight of a glimmer on the floor; just a feeble spark.

"To'mie," she called again, feeling her way. Her breath caught in her lungs with fear as her hands came in contact with a little body. She felt it all over. It was still.

"To'mie! To'mie!"

Saliva dripped from her mouth in agony. With frantic haste she searched for matches, upsetting the table, knocking over chairs, bruising herself against them.

"Oh-oh-oh!" she stuttered, with halting, trembling sounds in her throat, as she found

the box. A scrape, a dull-blue splutter, then the yellow flare of pine. She held it over her head. The child lay at her feet, eyes closed, the small round face gray-white. Sneaking glowworms of fire still ate their slow way on his little shirt. The arms and hands were tossed in pain on the dirty boards. The match went out then, its red embers gleaming in her fingers.

"Oh-oh, To'mie, what 'ave 'un done?" she cried, monotonously.

Then she remembered her husband—the storm. "There's na light! He'll be gone astray; oh, God!" she whimpered, tears streaming down her face.

She got another match going, found a candle. The only lamp was smashed to atoms, the broken glass glimmering at her feet, shining with the oil that had not taken fire. Wildly she jammed the candle in a crack of the wall and rushed out. The wind snatched at her form, dragging it, hurling it back, her skirts flapping about her with loud cracklings.

She stared out into the night, her eyes little

by little accustomed to the darkness. She found the tiny light then; it was almost abreast of her, keeping away.

"He's lost an thar' be no lamp for 'un!" she shrieked, and shrieked again, the wind mocking her, vieing its strength with hers. Inch by inch of her vision, the light on the tumbling waters passed.

"He's agoin' on Welcome Rocks ef I can't stop 'un afore he gets too far to beat in!"

Clawing at her dress, she watched the light, fascinated by the danger, the gale casting her long hair loose, tossing it about her face. She ran in again.

"To'mie!" in a whisper of agony—the little figure unconscious before her. A thought came. She tore the small kindlings from the wood-heap, set the heavy table by the window with herculean strength, ripped off her skirt with desperate pulls, mopped the still fresh oil on the floor with it, and touched the heap with the candle. It flamed up instantly, the red tongues leaping and twining in the stillness of the interior. From time to time she fed the blaze with

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wood of every kind. Spoons with wooden handles, the chopping-bowl, anything that would burn, and the fire *did* burn, scorching the low rafters. All the time she whispered: "To'mie, To'mie!"

She dashed out then, the blaze going well on the table, eating its way through the wood with snappings and showers of sparks.

"He be comin' right!" she murmured, seeing the light advancing towards her.

"To'mie boy!" she patted the little, still hands, "I had ter save 'un an' ye didn't know!" She got water and bathed the child's face, carefully tearing away the burned clothes. The big eyes opened.

"W'ere is dadda?"

"Comin', darlin', 'un 'll be here right soon—right soon!"

Her head dropped on his neck and the scalding tears flowed fast.

Hurtling spasms of the gale shook the walls, rattled the doors on their hinges, made the puny window supports creak and retch. The woman rose slowly and got the candle, dread-

ing what she feared to see. By the wavering shine the child's burns were vividly apparent. The mother quivered in sympathetic pain. She stripped the little figure tenderly, the thin small voice calling for "dadda."

Rough woman of a rough life, she knew nothing of remedies, and wrapped the boy in a coarse blanket whose mat was torture to the raw spots.

"Dad-da! Dad-da!" he called again and again.

"'Un 'll be here!" she crooned, caressing the fevered forehead.

Leaving the child on the low bed, she went out into the darkness once more, while the fire on the table burned strongly. The gale was powerful as ever. Tearing at her, it forced her behind the angle of the building. The boat's light was close on to the river's mouth now; she could see the two men tending sails and watching their chance to run into the calm waters of the high-tide bay.

"Eh-h!" she screeched, involuntarily, as a long, hungry sea curled towards the boat. She

held her breath! The little vessel rose bravely, stern to the heavens, bow to the bottom—and the growling water passed beneath. It floated quietly then on the still waters of a full tide in the land bay. The two men shoved ashore with the help of long oars dipped to the shallows.

The woman was on the shingle, waiting, when the blunt bow struck with sandy gratings. One man sprang out, alighting heavily on the stones. He swung round, seeing the woman.

"Ye wass near makin' we astray!" He hauled in on the bow hawser.

"Yiss, an' for why ye did na have the light 'arly?" he grumbled again, pulling away at the rope. "'Tis the bist load we 'un got many a trip, an' ye coome putty clos't to losin' it, 'n' we!"

"Man!" she called in his ear, to make her words audible above the screaming wind, "To'mie's burned hisself bad! Fell down th' lamp whin I war a-watchin' for ye!"

The rope slackened in the big man's hands.

"Naw!" he said. She nodded. Stalwart and huge he looked in his oil-skins, the ocean's reek dripping from cap and sleeves.

"Pull—aw-ay!" A voice came from the boat that drifted off the shore. He hauled in diligently, till the short bowsprit struck him on the chest. The other man hopped out, lantern in hand.

"Hold her, Joe!" The big man grabbed his wife by the wrist, and half ran, half dragged her to the house.

The candle flared and twinkled as ever. He let go of the woman and went to the bed.

"Dad-da! Dad-da!"

"Zure, son, I'm right here, a-lookin' out fur ye, my fine boy!"

One small hand clinched the big, cold one tensely.

"Dad-da! Da . . ." the frail voice ceased.

He stared at her blankly, the suddenness of it numbing his big, simple mind. The fire on the table starved to a death of many glows, and the candle-fat dropped on the floor with spl-uts that were audible between the heavier attacks of the wind.

Like some being from a long-gone time, the tall, powerfully gaunt, Labrador fisherman stood by the woman, dazedly. The gleam of the faint

light shone on his oil-skins, glistened on the scales that covered the front of his jacket, danced by reflection on the ponderous boots, and showed great drops gathering slowly in the deep-set, pain-laden eyes.

With a sob and a curse he fell on his knees by the child, the sound of his sorrow filling the interior harshly. The woman, too, knelt.

"What'll we to do?"

He looked up and around the room, his helplessness and lack of knowledge burning through the moisture of his eyes.

"'Un'll ha' to go to Hawks Bay!" she whispered. He turned a white face to her.

"In that?" his great shaking fist towards the door. They listened, lips apart, his tongue moving in his mouth with a slight clucking.

Shriek on shriek, gasping, moaning, then howling, the wind drove on, tearing at the house, rattling the long shingles overhead with noises like the clattering of dried bones. And over it all the ceaseless, surging *boom—boom—boom* of a terrible sea, that crackled and roared, its strength piled up for thousands of miles, vent-

ing itself on the rugged coast, that flung back the waters crushed and broken in great masses of spume and spray, that gurgled and eddied to the depths again.

"In that?" he muttered.

"Ay, man—fur t' boy!"

He got to his feet, trembling: "'Tis na I'm afeard, Kyrie, but God knaws ef t' boat 'll live yonder—hear 'un, woman, *hear 'un!*"

Crash—boom—swssssht, and a short silence, then, thundering furiously, the breakers rushed in again, a pandemonium of lather and foam and sound.

He went to the door, bracing himself there, staring out into the whirling, screeching night with calculating eyes.

"Mabbe me an' Joe'll git her outen West Channel; ef we doan't, God help us!"

The lantern came up from the bay shore.

"She's fine for t'night, bow an' starn anchor holdin' good; a'n't it feerful?" The other man entered.

The father grabbed him by the arm: "Me an' you 'll gotter git ta Hawks Bay to-night!"

The other stared at him, and a grin spread over the bronzed, weather-beaten face.

"Na, na, man; ye'r jokin'!"

"Joe, Joe!" the woman crawled at his feet, "t' boy is burned so bad, an' t' doctir over to Hawks Bay 'll save 'un! Won't 'e go with Jack?"

His eyes focussed themselves on her for an instant, then followed her finger as she pointed to the child. He stiffened at the sight of the small bundle on the bed.

"West Channel, Jack?" he grunted, pushing the woman's hands away from his knees.

"Yiss, that be our wan hope!"

"God bless both o' ye, an' may ye be payed by 'Un as ye desarv'! Oh, lads, remember me a-waitin', a-watchin' for ye ta coome wi' th' doctir!" The woman flung herself by the child's body, racked with tears.

She was alone.

Jack crawled aboard the boat first.

"T' fish 'll do fo' ballust," he shouted.

The other nodded, his lips moving, but Jack could not hear the words for the yelling of the wind in the rigging. They triple-reefed the main-sail and left the fore-sail snuggled on its boom.

"Single on t' jib!" Jack shouted.

Hand over hand they dragged the stern anchor aboard.

"She's afloat an' free!" Joe screamed, as he cast off the bow-line.

A hundred yards from the calm waters of the little bay, the raging seas foamed and banged at the bar. The broad-beamed craft wouldn't obey her helm quickly enough.

"Shove her out!" Jack ordered. The other pushed her bow round with a sweep, and crouched to windward as he felt her lean and shiver. Straight for the gigantic seas they went.

"God be wi' us!" Jack called.

"Ay, an' we'll need 'Un!" Joe hung out over the rail as the stanch boat scurried out.

Jack, watching his chance, luffing, when mountains of water came, easing away afterwards.

"Let her slip!" Joe shouted with all the

strength of his lungs. Jack kept her away hard. Just when they were on the bar a great watery height rose up against them, its crest curling white in the darkness, reflecting yellow in the feeble lantern-light.

"God!" Joe whispered, cringing against the beams. Up and up, fairly pointed towards the sullen heavens, the boat rose, shaking her stubby bowsprit clear of the dark waters. The comber passed beneath, and she slid down the other side squashingly, darting spray on each bow.

"A' right now, Joe!"

"Keep away a shade; 'tis a nor'easter, an' Hawks Bay lies east ha' south!"

Plunging, dashing, climbing into the long lines of seas, they worked ahead slowly, soaked to the skin, hungry and tired after the long day's cod-hauling, but determined—"Fur t' sake o' t' boy."

The *Susan Jenkins*, fishing-schooner out of Gloucester, bound home from the Banks with

forty thousand pounds of cod under her hatches, streaked through the Straits of Belle Isle at daylight under double reefs, her decks hidden in smother and dashing spray.

"Lucky we come inside the Straits this v'y'ge!" the burly man at the wheel sang out, his great paws gripping the spokes. The skipper nodded, never taking his eyes from the long, semi-hidden coast of Labrador to starboard.

"Keep her away a p'int!"

"Ay, ay!" and the bows fell off, swaying up and down.

"Steady as ye go!"

"Steady it is!"

Left alone, the helmsman swept the dreary wastes with a comprehensive glance. Everywhere liquid mountains that moved on their foundations, growing in size as the light became stronger. They tumbled helter-skelter after the schooner, threatening to pile on her decks; as they reached her taff-rail they threw her towards the clouds with a sickening lift, and a heart-raising drop afterwards. She shivered from keelson to truck, from stem to stern, under the

pounding blows, staggering like a wounded thing. The man shifted his chew of tobacco to the other cheek and spat vigorously.

"Damn lucky!" he swore to himself, easing his fingers on the wheel. On the port side the heights of Newfoundland loomed gray and indistinct through the salt haze and drift.

"We're *a-movin'!*" as hill after hill slid by.

With shrill squeaks and eerie whinings the wind shot through the rigging, tugging at the canvas, making the bolt ropes clack loudly against the main boom. He watched the stick buckle and straighten; casting his eyes aloft he noted the arc of the ship's roll at every sea, and he spat again. Brighter and brighter came the day, showing the vastness of the raging waters and the rank on rank of swiftly moving wind-clouds. Swinging his face to starboard then, his eyes stopped suddenly and he leaned forward against the kicking wheel. He peered for a moment.

"Ahoy bel-ow!" he shouted, quickly, his big voice sounding strong and clear. The skipper's touselled head appeared instantly.

"Boat upsot; man on her b' th' look of it!"

"Where away?"

"'Bout three p'int t' starboard!"

The other, in old trousers and shirt, carpet-bag slippers on his feet, braces flapping about his legs, gazed fixedly.

"Ye'r' right, by hell!"

Slipping and cursing along the deck he got to the fo'castle hatch.

"Tumble up, ye divvils, lively now; boat adrift with a man aboard. All hands to their post, an' the cook at the fore-sheet!"

Like bees from a disturbed hive, the men clambered out, growling at each other when some one was slow on the ladder. The skipper was aft already.

"Now then, ye lubbers—" he trumpeted through his hands, "when I sings out, claw in on yer sheets like hell fury!"

One eye on the men scurrying about the slippery decks, the other on the turtled boat that came into sight and vanished often, a dark thing clinging to it, his wits worked fast.

"Luff!—*Luff*, ye fool!"

"Well, ain't I?" the other grumbled, climbing the spokes. Nearer and nearer to the boat, tearing through the seas, catching their brunt on her quarter now, the schooner plunged on, flinging the green high at every leap. The skipper's muscles tightened under his clothes as the schooner swung ahead with awful speed, the gale hissing about his ears, forcing the spume in his nose and mouth—almost abreast of the boat now.

"Stand by!" he shrieked. The men laid to the ropes, waiting. "Up with her, quick! Claw in, ye beggars—damn ye, *claw in!*"

He jumped to the wheel and yanked the spokes over, the helmsman pushing with all his strength.

"Hard down! Ha-a-rrd down!" His breath whined between his teeth as he labored.

Staggering frightfully, the schooner forced her bows into the weight of the seas. The skipper let go the wheel, and dashed amidships to the rail. Just under their bows was the overturned boat, a man hugging the round bottom with knees and nails.

"Away!" he yelled, waving his arm.

The schooner fell off, grazing the sullen load beneath. A sailor in the chains made a wild grab and missed. The skipper saw it and cursed. A huge sea lifted the lone man, the skipper reached out, clinging to the ratlines with one hand, and fastened his steel-like fingers in the castaway's jacket. A wrenching heave, a grunt of effort, and the wrecked fisherman sprawled on the deck, the boat bumping and banging alongside.

Sails snapping with report of guns, sheet-ropes writhing and curling about, nests of dories clanging and clattering, the schooner faced the storm.

"Keep her off, dang ye!—keep her *off!*"

Paying no further attention to the rescued man, the skipper was all over the decks at once. A haul here, a pull there, a shove and an oath beyond, till the schooner was on her course again, fleeing before the seas. He drew the sweat from his face, drawing a deep breath.

"Pretty cussed fine, that was!" he remarked, in a shout, to the man at the wheel.

"Damn ef 'twasn't!" the latter answered, shifting his chew, admiration in his eyes.

"Does a feller good to wake up onct awhile!"

He went over to where the stranger was sitting, propped against the main-mast. "Hello, friend; dang near went ter Davy Jones that cruise!"

No answer. The big body in oil-skins sagged, a tremor passing over it now and then. The skipper watched. Then the man lifted his head. The whiteness of the face and the pain in the eyes startled the skipper.

"Too bad 'bout th' boat, man, but ye'r' in fair luck to be alive!"

"'Tis no t' bo-at, zor, 'tis t' boy! Me an' Joe wass agoin' fur t' doctir t' Hawks Bay!"

The skipper looked to port quickly.

"We're past now, friend, an' ye know we couldn't beat her back in this! Th' lads w'uld kick, too, incause we've a big first cargo of No. 1's aboard an' prices 'll be high for all hands at T. Wharf!" As he spoke, a lump that would not be choked down, rose in his throat. "Poor divvil," he muttered, angry at

his own helplessness. "God A'mighty, s'posin' 'twas one o' my kiddies!"

The giant figure rose slowly, stumbled aft, and stood watching the fast vanishing shores of Labrador, with poignant sadness, tears dripping, mingling with the salt of the sea, and rolling down his jacket. He stretched out his arms then, and a wild, heart-broken sound burst from his lips. The man at the wheel trembled in superstitious awe.

"To'mie, boy, I couldna git to make it, lad. I did for me best, I did, forgie yer dad-da. Joe's gone, a-blessin' ye an' wishin' me luck whin t' big sea tuk him! *A-blessin'* ye lad, an' t' God must hear 'un; mabbe 'un's a-talkin' wi' t' God now!"

The huge form wavered an instant, and fell inert at the skipper's feet.

"God A'mighty!" He knelt beside it. "Poor divvil! I'll set him ashore here next trip, sure's my name's Johnson! S'posin' I lose three days!"

He ordered the man to be carried forward, and saw personally to it that he was fed and

clothed and that a big whiskey was given him.

Nearly all the rest of the day the skipper paced the decks in silence; now and then stopping to watch the wild seas curl hungrily at his ship, and sneering at them when they were disappointed by her buoyancy.

"Keep her to her course! Hold her to it!"

"Ay, ay," the man at the wheel answered. "Hold her to it 'tis!"

Two months, and three passed, since Ellison's disappearance from Forteau, Labrador.

The night he and Joe started out for the doctor, the woman cried and prayed in her uncouth way. The child became conscious and called for "Dad-da." She tried to soothe its pain, and thought of oil. She ran out in the semi-daylight, and filled a pannikin with the stinking, heavy fluid in one of the many tubs that were ranged behind the net-house. She stood peering into the mists of spray for an instant.

"T' God dat es a-watchin' us all be wi' ye!" she murmured.

Through the days and nights following she bathed the child's burns in the rancid oil of cods' livers. And day by day the young life grew stronger and stronger. On the sixth day she became anxious, the child out of danger, for her husband.

"Should 'a' be' back th' now," she muttered.

Far and away, stretching out to a vast distance, the spotless wastes of calm waters met her eyes. The noon haze caused the long, slow heave and fall of the sea to be as waving masses of blue under a pure sky. Monotonously calm but for the sluggish swell of a storm somewhere beyond, the ocean was quiescent, showing each little puff of wind in wrinkles on its huge breasts. The Newfoundland shore, ten miles away, stood out of the waters, gray and grim and far distant, an indistinct line of solidity against the moving, heaving sea.

Day after day she watched and waited, a grim fear tugging at her mind. Each night she

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lighted a fire on the beach, "So'z he kin zee th' way in."

As the days fled by, some with their calm, others with wild, tumbling storms, she waited, hoping against hope.

One afternoon Dan Bearn, of Black Bay, dropped anchor in the high-tide harbor, and came ashore.

"I got this to gie ye, Kyrie, an' I'm fearful zad!" he handed her a damp, soggy piece of wood with the letters "K. E." on it, almost obliterated.

She stared at it, a gripping pain at her heart.

"T'ank ye, Dan!"

The rough fisherman went away, and she listened to the creak of his oars as he pulled out to his boat.

"To'mie!" she gasped, brokenly, seizing the child in her arms—"To'mie!" The tears came then, and draggled down her face, soaking into her rough blouse. "Dad-da's gone f'om us, To'mie; thar's jest me an' you now!"

The boy laughed in childish glee.

"To'mie an' mam' togedder!" he gurgled, his

arms about her neck. "Dat nice!" whispering in her ear.

She tried to make him understand, but in vain.

"To'mie an' mam' togedder, an' dad-da!" was the only answer from the little red lips. She put him to sleep then, and went out into the silent night.

Glistering with the reflections of the stars, the ocean sobbed and moved sullenly, crinkling on the beach with lappings and soft murmurings.

"Jack!" she whispered, throwing her arms to the moving waters—"Jack!"

No answer to her heart's cry, but the sodden beat—beat—beat of the long swells on the bar.

"Where be ye, Jack?" she screamed.

Thr-r-om — thro-o-om — swa-a-a-sht! the sea answered her. For hours she waited, tending her fire, that every fisherman on the coast knew as "Widder Ellison's Light."

Then she gave up hope, living her lonely life, tending the lobster-pots, setting and hauling *his* nets.

Dan Bearn dropped anchor again in the little bay.

"Will ye marry me, Widder Ellison?"

She looked into his honest eyes with great sadness.

"Naw, Dan! I'm a-waitin' fur Jack! He be not dead, an' I knows ut! Naw man w'uld t' God above kill w'en he wass agoin' fur t' sake o' hiss child!"

And the fisherman went away again, no anger or bitterness in his heart; only sorrow that "Sh' is mad entirely!"

Alone with the growing, laughing boy, Kyrie lived, tending her nets and pots by day, feeding her fire on the beach by night. September came, and with it the hurtling gales of the equinoctial storms. It was hard to keep her fire going these nights, because the wind dragged the wood away fast as she piled it.

One evening she built up a huge cairn of timber, weighting it down with stones. She stared out across the Strait keenly. *Boom—bo-om—bo-om!* the breakers thundered, and Kyrie shuddered.

"'Twass sich a night he an' Joe wass gone!" she whispered, lighting the heap with a kerosene-soaked rag.

The mass flamed and flared, shooting into the wind with droning heat. The woman watched the blaze for a time, while the seas thundered and foamed at her feet, while the wind jerked at her clothes.

"I hope no wan goes ashore on Welcome Rocks this night," she murmured, and went into the house.

"Dad-da's comin'!" the child said, in sound sleep, and the mother sobbed outright.

"Ef he only wass comin', To'mie!"

She fell on the bed, crying and sobbing bitterly.

The wind screeched about the house as of old, whirling around the cracks viciously, moaning away. The woman's sorrow stilled then, and the only sound in the house was the pound—pound—pound and clash of raging seas, beating themselves to nothingness on the bar. Great whirling clouds dashed over the skies, gray-black and repulsive in the gloom. Heavier

and heavier came the blow, fiercely echoing and screaming. The continuous crashing *ro-am—bo-om—swssht* of the combers drowned out the sound of the wind, and the woman slept.

Excited, rough voices woke her. "'Un's no chanct ter live on Welcome Rocks in *this* gale!"

The words sifted slowly into her brain.

"'Tis 'un ship ashore!" She fought herself into her clothes and ran out.

Lanterns moved here and there on the beach, and in their light the snarling, furious waves rolled with frightful weight, raking the shore with foam and yellow bubblings.

"She's agoin'!" Kyrie heard a fisherman yell.

She saw then the masts of a schooner, hard and fast on the Welcome Rocks, the ship itself smothered in spray. Ay, and she could hear the rasping sound of wood grinding. The masts vanished then, and the fishermen gathered on the shore were silent.

"God help 'un!" she said.

Bodies drifted to the land, beaten by the ponderous seas, bruised, quite dead. One by one she saw them pulled from the angry frother.

Then, faintly showing in the light of the many lanterns, a man's head showed in the surf.

"T'ere's 'un alive!" somebody shouted. They linked hands and reached out as far as they dared in the undertow.

"*Got 'un!*"

The last man dragged in two forms, nearly senseless.

"Praise be t' 'un's God!" Kyrie whispered.

The bodies were on the beach.

"'Tis Widder's Jack!" a voice roared.

Scarce believing her ears, Kyrie went to them. Seeing, she dropped on her knees.

"Jack! Jack! ye've coomed ag'in!"

The man's eyes opened: "Kyrie," he whispered—"Kyrie."

They disengaged his fingers from the neck and wrist of the man he had saved. The latter moved slightly, staring at Ellison, and muttered, in a dazed, weak voice. "What happened? Oh, my God! I know—we went astray!" He got to his knees haltingly, staring out onto the raging waters, the wind whisking the drops from his matted hair.

"My ship?" he groaned, turning in agonizing fear from face to face of the circle about him. Here and there a head shook solemnly—and he understood. He staggered to the edge of the beach, the group parting before him silently. Lapping at his feet, foam ripples, remnants of mighty seas, splashed and receded. Tears streaming from his rough, unkempt chin, he peered through the clouds of stinging spray that drove over the beach with hissings and cold strength. "My ship!" He shook a trembling, knotted fist towards the depths. "Damn ye, I hope you're satisfied now!" His tones were steel-like in their fury. The skipper turned and saw the line of bodies. "My boys, my ship, my everythin'!—Who brought me ashore?" he snarled then.

"I did!" Ellison stood before him. The two watched each other's eyes. A faint smile stole over the skipper's face.

"God, man, I saved ye onct to bring yer back home; ye've saved me in return—fur what? Ye don't know! 'Tis best ye shouldn't!" He looked seaward once more, and a fierce ague

seemed to grasp him. He wavered, almost fell.

"Thar!" he said, holding out a clammy hand —"shake, Jack. I said I'd put ye ashore here, an' I kept my word, didn't I?" Holding Ellison by a powerful grip, he swung his head— "Where's his wife?"

Kyrie darted forward.

"Is—is his boy alive?"

"T'ank 'un God, yiss!" she sobbed. Ellison's face lighted up with a rare glow. The skipper saw it.

"Now don't tell me th' divvil never did a kind job!" His head sank on his chest.

"Not t' say that, mister!" Kyrie screamed, so that her words might be heard above the storm sounds. "Put 'un down t' th' credit o' the sea!"

He looked at her, his eyes shining strangely.

"Ay," and again the great fist shook towards the roaring billows: "Put it down to the credit of the sea!"

II

THE WHITE SQUALL

THE Straits of Belle Isle were smooth and still, save for the long, slow heave and fall of a sullen ground-swell.

Newfoundland stood out of the waters, a faint, dim green mass, and Labrador showed cold and low on the western horizon.

"Ain't it hot?" The skipper drew the back of a slimy hand across his face.

"'Tis warm, zure!" Jack Ellison answered, hauling away at one of the hand-lines. The boat drifted evenly across the fishing-grounds, moved by a tiny breeze from the south.

"Blast 'un, *dog!*" the fisherman growled, recognizing the short jerks as the fish came up out of the greater pressure of deep water. It was. He brought the vicious, slim body out

with a heave, leaned down, caught the ugly snout and bent it up at an angle.

"Thar, blast ye, swim!"

Swim the robber, the devastator of the cod-banks, did, its snout causing ripples to twinkle away in the sunlight. Round and round it went, getting weaker; then it barely moved; a flop, and its white belly gleamed on the surface.

"Sarv' 'un right!" Ellison grunted, feeling his array of lines. The skipper watched it all, perched on the tiller.

"Ay, Jack, he's got it this cruise!" He yanked one hand then, and pulled lustily. "No dog-fish this!"

Throwing a little jet of water as it sang over the low rail, the line piled aboard, coiling at the skipper's feet.

"Got 'un too!" the big fisherman shouted, pulling in with great swings of his arms.

"Bet my 'un's bigger 'n your 'un; bet ye a chaw!"

"I take it, ye lubber! Heave-ho together!"

Their bended backs swayed rhythmically.

"Thar's a COD!" the skipper said, with great

satisfaction, a huge fat fish at his feet, its mouth-feelers twitching and trembling.

"I'm be a-comin'!" the other grunted, heaving with all his strength, the line eating into the wood.

Bssst—bssst—bssssst! It sounded like a saw going through damp cedar. He reached over, fumbling in the water, and straightened up with an effort.

"'Tis a foine 'un!"

Gasping, the monster cod rolled its great eyes, dying on the stone ballast.

"It are that!"

The skipper handed over his black plug.

"Ye've won, Jack, snip her off!"

Ellison hitched his oil-skin trousers before he claimed his winnings, and washed his mouth in sea-water, for the taste of tobacco was very scarce between the two, and neither knew when they should be able to get more. He took the plug gingerly then, and turned it over and over in his big, black-haired hand, eyes agleam with anticipation. With lips parted eagerly, he put the tobacco between them and sank his white teeth into it.

"Don't suck the molasses out o' the rest!" the skipper admonished. Ellison stowed the chew way back in his upper jaw and mouthed ecstatically.

"Voine!" he muttered. "Voine!"

The skipper looked at the piece that was left.

"It and t'other bit was all I saved — that night!" and his eyes were sad, looking over the long, rolling distances.

"When am I agoin' ter git back to my kiddies?" he groaned, softly—"when?"

Ellison dropped the lines, and put his hand on the other's shoulder.

"'Twon't be long afore 'un o' th' Bank fleet 'll be in th' Straits. I'll put ye aboard 'un, man, niver fear!"

The gaunt American, his face furrowed and seamed with care and bitter heart-aches, looked up.

"Ye'r' a good man, Jack Ellison. Ye and yer woman hev' bin kyind to a capting widout ship nor money, an' I'm damned proud ter be able to help ye fish! Ah but, lad," the deep-set eyes glistened, "ye don't know what it is to lose a

good ship! A grand craft she was, God bless her timbers! an's carried me through many a gale an' tight corner; stancher'n South Church in Bosting, truer 'n a man's wife, she's been to me. Allus was ready when I axed her to keep her clo'es on in a big gale, fur the sake of high prices, an' I'd give her a new coat o' paint fur 't, an' a brand clean top hamper outfit, gaskets an' bonnets, too. She knew it, darlin' old *Susan J*. Th' thousands o' miles I've seen pass under her bottom, that was allus clean an' bright; th' pounds an' pounds o' cod she's tuk into T. Wharf, an' I, God help me! lost me bearin's that night becos' o' th' tide, an' cast her away!" The thin lips quivered at the memory, and the broad shoulders trembled.

"Le' me talk, it's comfortin'," he said, when the other tried to soothe. "Cast her away, the best o' the fleet; that could show a shinin' stern t' th' whul' crowd, an' was willin' allus when I said th' word." He stood up. "An' ye, ye damned ocean thet hev' give me money fur t' wife an' kiddies fur years an' years, hev' done me dirt at last! I'll square wi' ye fur it! Jack

here cheated ye onct out'n my life, an' I'll cheat ye out'n it allus, damn ye!"

"Ssht, man, do na go on like that, 'tis sacrileegious, zure!" The simple mind of the Labrador fisherman was aghast.

"Don't you tell me not to go on!" The skipper's face was livid with fury. "Wait till *yer* wife an' young 'un hev' everythin' took by th' sea, an' mebbe you, Jack Ellison, won't dare to stand up like a man to my face, an' say that y' don't curse it as I do!"

The other hove in meditatively, and snapped another cod into the fish-hole. He baited with unconscious care and watched the gleaming bit sink under the still waters. They worked their lines in silence then, pulling in, unhooking, baiting, and casting out; the great leads striking with *phflu-utts*, and little spots on the calm where bubbles rose for an instant.

Heave and fall, heave and fall; ever the monotonous surge passed under them, wavelets running away from her clinker-boards as the boat settled in the long valleys of green. As far as the eye could reach was that same, irre-

sistibly moving undulation. The ropes on the stocky masts rattled and slatted, and the rudder squeaked in its socket, swashing about forlornly. Over it all a strangely hot sun, that threatened wind by its torpid glare.

Now and then the skipper's face turned to the north, and he sniffed suspiciously. "Ef I was on the *Susan J*. I'd order a sharp lookout t' th' nor'ard!" he volunteered. Ellison yanked in a cod before he answered. Then he, too, stared at the northern horizon.

Bleary and vague it looked, the rise and drop of the waters seeming to wash the skies.

"I guess 'un's nawthing but 'un puff, mabbe—most likely!"

Johnson's eyes twinkled.

"A' right, Jack! Ye'r' in command!"

They fished on, the tattoo of dying cods' tails sounding muffled in the hole.

A breeze ruffled the surface, stirring the hair on the capless heads. The skipper sniffed again when the chill went through him, but he was silent; pulling in, baiting, and throwing out regularly. A stronger puff came, crinkling the

waters, forcing the boat sideways, the eddies of her passage boiling silently to windward. The skipper looked at Ellison. He was busy hauling.

"Might keep an eye out!" he suggested, dropping a lead over, the line murmuring through his fingers.

"Wi' sich luck a' this, we'll stay!" the fisherman answered, tugging at another line.

"A' right, lad; *ye'r' in command!*" The skipper's eyes were fixed to the north. When he hauled in he threw his cod into the hole by instinct, watching the skies.

They seemed to rise then, a gap between them and the long, dead roll. Out of the wastes, a faint, indistinct mass of cloud appeared, forming ranks that spread across the entire north.

"See that?" Johnson asked.

"Ay, I see 'un; t' fish is comen' fast! We'll make t' best of 'un afore t' wind strikes!"

The skipper grinned, turning his face from the other.

"It don't make no matter to me—now!" he whispered. With the last word a great sorrow dropped into his eyes.

"Keel haul ye!" he hissed at the waters, "yer agoin' ter try ter catch me ag'in! Consarn ye, come on; I'm a-waitin'!"

Whe-e-e! A heavy blow sang through the ropes, and the breasts of the long swells were deeply ruffled. Ellison got in two fish at once, big ones. He hove out again, peering at the clouds.

"Ye'r' a mite keerless, lad, fur t' sake of cod! Thar's other days a-comin'!"

"Niver had no sich 'un luck afore!" Jack whispered in exultation, dragging another cod aboard.

"Mind yourself, that's all!" the skipper warned, tossing a fish from his line, among the others.

From the long swells the waves rose as if by magic, creating new lengths, with the old ones as foundations. The sun shone yet, decking the white crisplets on the seas with scintillating points. The blow passed. An even murmur whispered all about the two men. Faster and faster the clouds moved up the heavens, great masses crowding on behind. The first of them reached the sun, obscuring it instantly; the air

was raw and damp, clammy with the promise of big wind. Regretfully, Ellison took in one more cod.

"'Tis 'un shame fer to—"

"Hark, man! Listen!" the skipper interrupted, leaping to his feet, eyes alert, nostrils quivering.

From afar to the northward came a moaning, rushing sound, that grew louder and vibrated on the air.

"Ye fool!" Johnson shouted, seeing the pallor of the other's face. "Don't ye know what's comin'? *'Tis a white squall!*"

He took command naturally.

"To hell with those lines!" as Ellison tried to pull them in, "'less ye want to swim! Get out that gratin' quick's ye kin—make yer hands work — there; now lash those sweeps to it! Look alive, man! — she's a-comin' *vicious!*" casting his eyes to the north. The water-line was one unbroken stretch of white where the blue-black clouds parted from it, and a faint roar drifted down to them. The big fisherman obeyed, scarcely realizing that he did so. John-

son glanced over the stubby boat. "Make *that* fast to the bunch!" seeing a long, light log that was aboard for wood in the little stove. Working desperately now, the enthusiasm of being told what to do by a man he trusted, urging him on, Ellison made fast the log. "Over with it, and eight fathom of yer line! More lively, Jack, dang ye! I don't want to be ketched asleep by *that!*" nodding towards the roar, that now seemed to thrumble in their ears. The skipper, while the other slaved, took half-hitches here and there, drawing the halliards tight, and grunting as he got an extra turn on them. The breeze fell then, and a breathlessness was around.

"An' you a Labradorian!" Johnson said, mockery in his voice. "Takes us Bankers ter tell ye 'bout yer own—hold fast!" he yelled.

With a downward rush and a scream, the wind struck them, the foam of the first rush pouring over their low sides. The boat tightened on her drag-anchor and labored heavily.

"She's a terror, no mistake!" the skipper shouted, climbing into his oil-skins. Ellison had

his on, and clung to the fore thwart, anxiety in his eyes.

The seas had not as yet reached their full proportions; they banged at the craft with short snarlings and hissings of spray. Driven like snow, their peaks vanished to leeward, and the surface everywhere was one long lather of straight-flying spume. Johnson unshipped the tiller and motioned to Ellison to come aft. They sat together, well astern, to lift the bows, watching the growth of the combers.

"What were ye a-thinkin' of, not sayin' nawthin' when ye see'd the wind shift into t' nor'ard so suddint?" Johnson yelled at the other.

"Niver knaw'un ter do this afore in t' Straits!"

"Straits or no Straits, ye want ter ke'p an eye on th' damned ocean! We'll be cussed lucky ef we gits outer this!—By gravvy! bail, man—come on, hustle! A couple more o' them 'll send us under!"

A towering crest broke inboard as he shouted. It swish-swashed among the cod and the stone ballast.

A lumbering bait-can in his grip, Ellison got to work, bracing his feet on the narrow deck stanchions. Johnson found a big dipper — a steady stream came from his compartment.

Br-um-p! Bang—swiiiiisht—zzp! A foot more in the hold; the cod floated now!

"Move lively, ye lubber!" The skipper's arms moved like parts of a machine. A scoop, a thrust, a lift, and a full stream over the side. His body swung with the pitching gracefully. Ellison struggled, but with all his great strength he could not keep up to the other.

"No use, Jack! Out ballast!" Johnson hove the stones by the board rapidly, their splash unnoticed in the howling noises of the squall. They got them all out, and shipped much less water for nearly an hour.

"It's wusser!" the skipper bellowed. Ellison nodded, fascinated by the frightful seas, accustomed as he was to wild days and nights on the coast. They waited some time longer; then the nasty *plash — plash — grrr—ssh* warned them that the water was gaining too fast under their feet. They bailed again, the cod

knocking about their legs, getting in their way.

"Drop, man, fur God's—" the rest of the skipper's sentence was strangled in his throat as a whirling sea buried the bows, its crest sw-a-ashing over them with a muffled *br-o-oom!* leaving the boat nearly half full.

"Out wi' th' cod, quick!" Johnson thundered.

Ellison hesitated.

"Dang ye, ye fool, d' ye want to be stowed away in Davy Jones's locker?" Johnson screamed with rage.

The big fisherman stuck his fingers through the gills of a twenty-pound cod and hove it overboard, a tight feeling at his heart, for times had been hard and fish scarce since he lost Joe and the big boat on the trip for the doctor.

One by one the great fish dropped into the boiling seas, their white forms visible for an instant in the gray light. Two hundred and seventy-nine went back to their element, though dead—unable to appreciate their liberty.

By dint of aching muscles, that worked only

"ONE BY ONE THE GREAT FISH DROPPED INTO THE BOILING SEAS"

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ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
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by force of will and danger, they got the boat nearly dry, and squatted together again, aft.

"Was it wuth fishin' so late fur? We might 'a' been comfur'able ashore now, stead o' prayin' ter God ter save us out here!"

Ellison did not answer. His huge hands were clinched, and Johnson could see his lips moving.

All the afternoon they backed slowly down the Strait, the gale tearing, the seas dashing at them. From time to time they bailed, but, now that the ballast and cod were gone, the chubby boat lifted more easily to the giant waves, settled with far less plunging in the deep hollows.

Night found them, cold and hungry, drifting on.

Of a sudden the wind slackened; in two hours but a light breeze was left of the blow.

"That's the way the danged nor'ard squalls go!" the skipper grumbled, stretching himself, aching and stiff.

"Zure we're lucky!" Ellison murmured, half asleep.

"Turn to, man! Git yer drag aboard, an'

let's git sail on fur Forteau! Dang it, we must be thirty mile down!" Johnson stared into the quiet darkness, balancing easily as the great remnants of the blow lifted the boat and let it fall with easy motion. Ellison got in the grating, the sweeps, and the log. Between them the two men hoisted the puny jib, settled the fore-sail in place, and stretched the main-sail to its fullest capacity.

"Take us five hours or more, I'll bet!" the skipper muttered, "all fur blasted cod that we ain't got!"

They sailed in silence, the breeze holding on gently.

Stars twinkled into sight, sparkling; no clouds anywhere in the deep-blue night skies.

"Ye've zaved me loife ag'in; I'm powerful obliged, Cap'n!" There was a catch in Ellison's voice, and a tremor. Johnson, curled up in the stern-sheets, tiller stowed under his arm, smiled grimly in the darkness.

"Say no more, Jack; I'm one ahead o' ye now. But, lad, ye sh'uld ha' knowed what was a-comin'!"

"Knows I oughter," the fisherman answered, slowly. "Wass more fur haulin' cod, I z'pose!"

The skipper chuckled, his shoulders tossing slightly. "Don't ye be too greedy when th' weather gi'es ye fair warnin'! *Ye* was owner o' this craft, an' I warn't agoin' to say *when*, till she got beyond ye."

A soft, chill stillness on the waters, the weakening breeze pushing them on. Ellison dozed; Johnson almost slept, waking with jerks of his head whenever he felt the boat keeping away from her course.

"It 'll be dom' lonely t' Forteau wi'out ye!" Jack's deep voice, deeper than ever because of his sleepiness, rumbled aft.

"Wait till I gets away, lad—wait, mabbe—" the skipper's voice shook. "God knows when I— What's that?" He was wide awake, standing on the stern-thwart. The other stared through the blackness.

Far off, apparently at the upper end of the Strait, two lights — a red and a green, blinked and vanished, then appeared again.

"'Tis 'un vessel!" Ellison announced.

"Ay, man, so I kin see, but what kind o' ship?"

Steadily the lights bore down on them, the mast-head gleam rayonning in the night.

"'Bout ship, Jack!" Johnson called, his tones thrilling with hope. "Yon's a Banker, I know! 'Bout ship, ye lubber, an' I'll cross her bows fur home!—fur home an' th' kiddies," he whispered, hauling in on the main-sheet as he jammed the tiller hard over. "Trim her flat 's she'll go!"

"Ay!" the fisherman answered, coiling the sheet-ropes at his feet, a sadness in his words —"Ay!"

Humoring the slightest whim of the wind, the skipper got the best out of the broad-beamed craft, and crept athwart-course to the on-coming lights, watching them, lips apart, eyes straining to gauge the chances of intercepting the ship.

Lap—lap—lap—grr-rgle! the waters parted under the squat bows heavily. The skipper licked his lips in anguish.

"We're goin' ter miss her, Jack, onless we make a light! Ha' ye got a match fur th' lantern?"

Ellison fumbled under his oil-skins and felt a damp box. "Cap'n, won't ye stay along o' me? I canna fush alone, an' t' wife an' boy 'll hev' hard times t' winter 'less I'm ter find some 'un to fush along o' me?" The voice was husky with emotion. Johnson watched the red and green lights swinging on, before he answered.

"I've saved ye twict!" he said, solemnly, "an' I axes ye is 't fair dealin's, when *my* missus an' kiddies is 'broke' ter home in Bosting?"

Softly whistling, gently pushing, the wind carried through the awkward sails, while the waters gurgled and *sip-sip-ed* against the sides.

Ellison stiffened in his wet clothes.

"Naw, zor, 'tis na fair!" he mumbled, and began striking the matches on the under-combing of the narrow deck. The first one spluttered, flared—went out.

"Steady, Jack, fur God's sake!" Johnson murmured, his eyes on the passing lights. Match after match then proved wet and useless. The skipper's face dripped with the sweat of agony. "She's maybe the last through

this winter!" he sobbed, dry-eyed, staring at the red light now, the only one visible.

"T'ere's 'un match left, Cap'n, *da's all!*" The skipper moistened his lips again.

"Ha' ye got th' lantern ready?"

"Yiss!"

"Give *me* th' match!"

Faces near together, the skipper saw the pain in the other's eyes at his words.

"Strike it, *you!*" he said, quietly.

Once—twice, the fisherman drew the bit of pine across the wood. No result. He undid his oil-skin trousers then, and his rough suit afterwards. *Ps-sht!* When he pulled the match-head against his coarse drawers, it flamed up, died away to a tiny flicker as he put it to the wick.

"Thank God!"

The skipper cried out in his joy as the oil caught, and a broad yellow beam of light came through the glass. He seized the lantern, and leaped into the frail rigging, worming his way up. Twice a circle to the left, twice a circle to the right, then three up-and-down dips (the signal of a doryman adrift).

Ellison watched, fascinated. The red light kept on for a few moments. Johnson breathed hard in suspense.

"They'd oughter know that signal!" he gasped. "She sees us!" he shouted then, as the green light and the white came into view. He slid to the bottom, and threw his arms about Ellison's neck.

"Yer match ha' saved my missus an' kiddies this cruise, Jack, an' Sam Johnson don't furgit."

He held the lantern high, waving it now and then.

Her bows whispering foam, the schooner bore down on them, all sails set, a ghostlike vision of canvas in the starlight; leaning slightly to the gentle wind, moving gracefully to the sea.

"Ahoy! Who do ye belong to, an' what d'ye want?" came a gruff, powerful voice.

"Capting Sam Johnson, ter come aboard!" the skipper shouted.

"Luff—luff! Tail in on yer sheets, my buccos!" the voice sounded again.

With a *swo-i-ish* and a boiling at her stern, the schooner hove to, a line of faces over her rail. The skipper put the fishing-boat alongside with a deft sweep of the tiller. A silence as he swarmed up the chain-plates, his feet clinking on the metal. Then an exclamation of surprise.

"Well, dod-gast me fur a lobster ef it ain't—"

"Sim, oh, Sim! It's you? What luck, man! —*what* luck!" Johnson said, hoarsely.

"Stow yer gab an' leg-go me paw!" Hearty and wholesome were the tones. "Who's yer pal?" the skipper of the *Martha Lowe*, out of Gloucester, bound home heavy in cod, asked, seeing the boat, Ellison waiting.

"Th' man 'ut saved me when I lost the *Susan J.*"

"Hell an' blazes, that's too bad, ye did! Th' missus comed to th' wharf when I was sailin' an' axed me particular ter find out what 'ad becomed of ye! She's right mis'able, Sam, waitin' fur ye!"

"Jack, lad, wull ye come wi' us? I'll guar-

antee good pay, an' stand th' loss of yer boat?" Johnson called.

Ellison, holding on to the rope cast by one of the crew, looked up, tears in his eyes that glistened in the lantern's light.

"Naw, Cap'n, t'anks to ye! Mus' go back ter Forteau fur to look arter my woman!"—he hesitated, a throb in his voice—"an' boy! Good luck to ye, Cap'n! You an' me's paid up now! T' God bless ye, Cap'n, an' yer no ta curse t' sea no more! 'T'as been good ta you an' me *t'other* night, an' good to *you this* night, Cap'n! Do na curse no more! Goo'-bye, Cap'n!"

The lone fisherman jumped to his sails, hauled the sheets trim and flat, his lantern showing dimly on his white face, as his boat filled away from the schooner in the light wind.

"We're not square yit!" Johnson shouted, a lump in his throat, "not by a damn sight, Jack! I'll see you ag'in, lad!"

Faintly over the rolling waters came the answer: "Good luck, Cap'n! I'll be glad to see

'un when 'un coomes, an' t' boy'll be glad, too! Goo'-bye, Cap'n!"

The schooner fell off to her course for home, Johnson watching the glow of the fisherman's lantern till it vanished in the darkness of the sea.

III

THE WORLD OF WATERS

"*By gravvy, at last!*" Skipper Johnson said, aloud, a huskiness of joy in his voice. He stood amidships of his new command, a spick-and-span, up-and-down Gloucester schooner, out of the yards but a month.

His eyes ran over her details, as they had done every day for a long time, with exultation. The cordage, stiff with newness, was coiled under the various belaying-pins, and the deck shone in the sunlight. The brass trimmings of the hatches reflected warmly, and the low, broad rail showed the grain through the clear varnish.

He stamped gleefully.

"Bless old Martins fur givin' me the chance! I'll show him what Sam Johnson kin do with

a craft like this!" He hesitated, then slowly: "She ain't no better'n the *Susan J.*, though!"

A new ship did not mean the giving up of old loves to the skipper. He wasn't that breed of a deep-sea man.

"We're off!" he said, as a long-legged, long-armed, powerful individual approached.

"Off it is, Cap'n, an' on the slickest article that 'll ever float over the Banks, take my oath on it!"

Burberry, mate of the *Lucky*—sometime, and heretofore all-time, A.B. on schooners out of Gloucester—hitched his new wide trousers with a quick heave.

"She's a sweet thing, Cap'n!" he muttered, looking aloft.

The cloud of white canvas, drawing without crease or scantness anywhere, bellied gracefully to the "middlin'" breeze.

"Tauter 'n a fiddle-string!" Johnson whispered, leaning against the rail. The lulling sound of waters furling under a long overhanging stern, came out of the sea; and the buoyant rise and sliding fall of the *Lucky* were things that

roused the skipper to his greatest capacity of pleasure.

"Mr. Burberry, you will call all hands to th' quarter-deck! I'll have a word to say!"

The mate stiffened at the "Mr. Burberry"; drew himself up.

"Ay, ay, Cap'n!"

The skipper looked astern. Already shrinking into tiny white things, the houses of Gloucester twinkled but faintly in the sun. And as he watched, they became a blur, undistinguishable.

"I'll have somethin' to show ye, missus, darlin', when I gets home this trip!" He waved his hand, as though he could be seen from the shore. The man at the wheel stared, and turned away discreetly, spitting to leeward as an excuse. Johnson paced up and down, pride and delight in his heart, stopping sometimes to watch the schooner's action, to enjoy her quivering sensitiveness to the long, ruffled swells that piled in from the east.

"You beauty!" he murmured, rubbing his hands fiercely. "You stand by me, an' I'll stand by you!"

As if in answer, the schooner leaned gently to a stronger puff, the rush of parting waters from her sharp bows foaming and gurgling astern. Johnson gazed aloft again, the fascination of the huge canvas holding him. High away, the main-topsail, clean-fitting, drew beautifully, and the great main-sail itself, rounded in a long curve from boom to gaff, did more than its share towards the schooner's speed. Fore-sail, fore-topsail, stay-sail, jib and flying-jib, all tugged at their sheets, every inch pulling.

The crew came aft, some pushing others to the front. They lined in a semicircle before the skipper, Burberry slightly to the fore. The Chinaman-cook and his French-Canadian assistant, Lamil Deranges, held hands at one end of the line, in anxiety. A speech from the skipper was unknown to them.

Johnson carefully made fast each button of his blue jacket, looking himself over, twitched his cap more on his eyes, dug his hands into his pockets, and faced the men. They waited respectfully. A motley crew they were. Here and there were Swedish faces with blue eyes,

square features, and flaxen hair. Big men, these! There, a Nova-Scotian, burly and apparently sullen. Beyond, several Prince Edward Islanders, broad faces almost smiling. Tucked away by the rail, an Anticostiman grinned, fumbling with his fish-skin watch-guard. The rest were Americans; squat figures with honest eyes and cheeks puffed with hunks of "Long John."

"Men o' the *Lucky*," the skipper began, hemming and coughing, that he might ponder on his words. "We are on a grand ship, an' we must treat her fine. There isn't much fur me to say, 'cept that which some danged Britisher said onct, 'I expects every son-of-a-gun aboard to do his dooty!' *His* dooty, I said!" Johnson became excited, "I'll deal out each man's trick for the cruise, and I look ter him to do it! Remember one thing, lads, that SAM JOHNSON NEVER LEAVES A DORY, be it a-blowin' like damnation, or a blasted calm, fog, an' drift!"

Hoarsely cheering, the echoes of the deep voices came back from the sails overhead.

"An' you, Wong Ling, with yer Frenchman, see to it that the lads gits No. 1 grub, s'posin' the *Lucky* be a-standin' on her bowsprit or gallivantin on her stern! See?"

"Me see," the aloe-eyed Oriental answered, suavely. "Frenchman see, too!" He kicked the lad on the calves.

"Certain. Ah do de bessis Ah can!"

"There'll be an extra drop o' grog Sunday nights; if some o' ye are away in th' dories, it 'll be kept fur ye!"

More cheering, and a rumbling of feet.

"Listen to me, lads!" The skipper shook a lean forefinger at them. "I expect quick answers to my orders, an' I *will* have them! Mister Burberry and me's both of us been years afore th' mast, and we knows what is in a man to do, an' what ain't. I begins th' cruise by likin' the whole danged lot of ye, incloodin' Wong; let's see if you kin make me hold th' same ideas when we gits back to T. Wharf! Now then, lads, three rollin', rollickin' cheers fur th' maiden cruise o' the *Lucky*, an'—we're damned lucky to be aboard o' sich a vessel!"

Ringing above the murmuring whistle of the wind in the rigging, the cheers rose and died away. The crew straggled forward, whispering to one another.

"Seems to tickle 'em up, Mr. Burberry!" The skipper smiled complacently.

"It did that, sir, belay *me*, if it didn't!" The mate's little brown eyes twinkled. "He's a good 'un, no mistake!" he muttered, as Johnson went over and stood by the man at the wheel. Feet spread apart, gripping the deck, he swayed with the dreamy motion, a picture of lithe strength. Some of the old furrows of care had disappeared from his bronzed, leathery face, and the high, broad forehead was smooth.

"You beauty!" he whispered again, softly.

Moving with that peculiar life and swing of a sailing-vessel, the schooner climbed the blue hills of Boston Bay, and coasted down their other sides, a snore of disturbed waters at her clean forefoot. Johnson's eyes roamed for'ard, aloft, amidships, always the same proud gleam of content in their depths.

"How do she handle?"

"Tender's a child, sor!"

To prove his words, though the skipper knew well enough, having sailed her to Marblehead twice on the trials, the big helmsman "gave her a spoke or two." The schooner trembled because of the new angle of the wind, fell off, and slid away faster, the snore for'ard changing into a drone.

"That 'll do! On yer course!"

"Course it is, sor!"

Then, with far-away cadence, the ship's bell sounded, two strokes, the metal overtone remaining for an instant. Ling shuffled aft, his long pigtail fluttering in the wind.

"Dinne' leadee, Capping, allee leadee, fine!"

"You will eat, Mr. Burberry?" the skipper called.

"I'm on deck, sir."

"So ye are—so ye are; I'd mislaid that fact in my mind! I won't be long!" Johnson disappeared through the after companionway, taking a lingering look about as he descended.

The watch below smoked and chatted merrily in the roomy, clean fo'castle. The triple rows of bunks, with their blankets, were shadowy and broad in the half-light. Tarpaulins, high boots, reefers, sou'westers, all dangled on each man's peg. Dunnage-boxes, still tied with bits of rope, were pushed against the for'ard bulkhead. And the atmosphere was untainted by bilge or reek of cod.

"By golly," Larz Ansen, the giant Swede of the port-watch, growled, good-naturedly, "she'm de bully wessel, sure!"

Tom McCloud, the Nova-Scotian, took his pipe from his mouth and squinted at the heavy timbers.

"Um!" He knocked one with a big knuckle. "She'll stand a heap o' poundin', my guess."

Many of the watch listened eagerly and with surprise, for Tom McCloud knew ships and skippers, their weaknesses and good points, better than any one in the crowd; he rarely praised either till after a cruise, and twenty-five years of practice makes a man's knowledge worth listening to.

"Um!" he grunted, with a long puff, leaning back, clasping a knee between his hands, "Cappen's fust-rate deep-sea cruiser, a'so; even tho' he did let th' old *Susan Jenkins* git away fro' him. I never hearn t'at tale; looks foggy ahead when Sam'el Johnson puts a boat away." He climbed into his bunk, stretching out comfortably. "We'll be more likely ter hev his p'ints down when we makes fast to T. Wharft ag'in, if we does." This last with a sigh and more puffs at the pipe. "Call me at one bell, will ye?"

"Ya, me call," Larz answered.

Silence in the forecastle; most of the men in their bunks, a few straightening out their belongings, tacking up humble little photographs or post-cards, souvenirs all of some one far astern. The rush and crinkling murmur of water a few inches outside caused sleepiness; they dozed on the benches, happy and content.

"Freshenin' a mite, Mr. Burberry?" The skipper came out of the companion, passing his long fingers under his coarse, tawny mustache.

He picked his teeth with a sharpened match. "By gravvy, that's what one might call grub, an' done up fine!"

He turned round.

"Wong!"

"Yass, Capping, Wong clomen!"

A pile of heavy china, with the remains of pork and beans, roast ham, and duff, in his arms, the Chinaman ambled to the deck, smiling as usual.

"Say, Wong, that thar dinner is better'n I ever had on any ship."

The aloe eyes winked—several times.

"Tlank ee, Capping. Wong vellee much glad you like. Wong makee cook manee manee tlip on fishee ship; all hands like Wong, tlank ee, Capping." He slid forward, his long, blue shirt streaming to his knees, sandals clattering.

The mate took a look to the southeast.

"She's comin' stronger afore she lets up, sir, I should say."

"Ay, Mr. Burberry, so it would seem."

Johnson liked the mate; in fact, he had requested that the man be signed in that capacity,

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though Burberry had never held an officer's berth before. The skipper remembered a certain night, a wild night it was, on the ship he had before the *Susan Jenkins*, when a big sea took him half-way over the rail, dragging him, helpless, because of a stunning blow in the ribs; and how a doryman, Burberry by name, had left his wheel and hauled him aboard. For that Johnson swore that he'd take the man out as mate "fust occasion." The skipper always kept his word. Neither spoke of this little incident on the high seas, where men's lives are valuable only to themselves. The owners are sorry when a schooner comes in from the Banks short-handed—that's all.

So it was "Mr. Burberry" and "Cap'n."

"I'd like to try her a bit in a wind, Mr. Burberry, tharfore keep her clothes on, onless ye think fit to call me. How's yer course?" he asked.

"Thought I'd lay a point outside o' Cape Sable, 'count o' the strong tide a-runnin' with this full moon, sir.—What's yer line at the wheel?"

"Nor' b' east, half east," the man there an-

swered, shifting a quarter of a spoke that he might be true on his course.

The skipper thought.

"That 'll do it. One moment," as the mate started towards the bows. "It's like this, Mr. Burberry"—the two put a leg each on the windward rail—"I'm a-countin' on gettin' fresh bait in Newfoundl'nd, an' I might 's well tell ye now as ter-morrer or next day, I've saved Martins a pile of cash by only takin' on twenty barrel o' herrin'. We kin buy 'em most like findin' 'em in Newfoundl'nd! 'Tis my risk, I know, fur th' ol' feller 'uld have a couple o' shark-fits ef he knew that bait's skeerce on t' west coast; but, by gravvy, I was t' only man thet dared try it out o' twenty o' them ol' women at Gloucester! Martins 's damn hungry fer th' man ut saves him money; an' he's just as quick at takin' th' ship from him ef he don't make it pay, an' pay well."

"God alive, Cap'n, don't ye know th' new law 'bout bait?"

Johnson stared at the other. "Naw; what's up?"

"Fool, triced-up ijjiot I be, not to ha' said nothing when th' men axed whar th' bait was!" The mate's voice shook. "I tho't as how ye'd be gettin' it to Portland; an' when I got yer orders on th' course, I made so much as to think ye'd be buyin' to Halifax, or Sydney, mabbe, an'—"

"What in hell ye blowin' about?" Johnson was angry.

"On'y this, Cap'n, that a 'Merican fishermen cain't buy no bait, cain't seine no bait, inside the three-mile limit o' Noofo'n'land! Three days ago the law was passed!"

A silence between the two, the afternoon sun yellowing their figures while the growing southeast wind lifted the waves higher and higher, forcing the schooner's lee scuppers awash.

"Damn sich a gover'ment as th' Britishers'!" Johnson shouted, forgetting the helmsman in his excitement. "Fo' years an' years we've sunk good money in their cussed island a-buyin' bait! Where in blazes was I thet I did na know o' this? Ol' Martins thinks he's got me for nawthing to skipper this craft. I sees his

dodge now, blast him! He knowed all 'bout it, an' expects *me* ter pay big money at Halifax fur bait, an' he'll git th' profits, knowin' by my pride thet I wouldna squeal!"

The mate offered no suggestion.

His eyebrows drawn down in an ugly scowl, Johnson was silent, thinking.

The *Lucky* slid away over the rising seas, tossing her quarter disdainfully when they tried with puny crests to splash aboard. *Sq-a-a-ash-rrrr*, murmured the green in the lee scuppers, marking a damp line on the deck and filtering back to their own again. Bim Sharkey, at the wheel, discharged a stream of tobacco to leeward, wondering.

"Now, by thunder!" The skipper clutched the main rigging fiercely, his face close to the mate's. "Sam Johnson ain't agoin' ter be beat by any sich dirty game as that! I knows—" he continued slowly, a deep anger thrilling in his voice—"whar I *king* it bait on t' west coast Newfoundl'nd, an' don't you furgit it, Mr. Burberry!"

The mate closed one eye and gazed aloft.

"Hope so, Cap'n—s' help me, I hope so. Bein's I know th' case now, I'm dod-blamed sorry I didn't speak at th' wharf; it 'uld ha' saved ye money, *I* guess."

"Ay, an' lost me th' ship, 'cause I'd never dassed take her wi' only twenty barrel o' bait, 'f I'd knowed th' new law. I hain't got much money, Mr. Burberry, an' there's the missus an' kiddies to house an' dress an' feed. But now that I'm started, I'll fetch her through an' make it pay fur all hands, or ye may put me down as a worn-out, dried-up, castaway hulk."

"Bully fer you, me Cap'n!" Neither heard the whisper of the man at the wheel. The mate was enthused by his skipper's earnestness.

"What's in me ter help, Cap'n, is yourn, an' I'm glad ter hev' saved sich a man as you."

"We will not refer to that occasion, Mr. Burberry, till th' proper time comes." Johnson stiffened in his official capacity. "I'm agoin' below; ef th' breeze gits too heavy on her spars, call me, but do na' take a rag off'n her, 'less I'm on deck."

"Ay, ay, Cap'n!" The mate saluted gravely.

The wind kicked up nasty, short-running seas outside, driving their feathering tops in sheets that spattered viciously far up the main and fore sail, dribbling from them to the deck.

"Best get yer oils," Burberry advised the helmsman; "I'll stand a few minutes t' trick for ye." He laid hold of the spokes; sometimes an eye on the binnacle, then staring into the schooner's top-hamper, he steered her cleverly and cleanly, a perfectly straight line of foam and bubbles dwindling astern as the *Lucky* roared on, everything holding. Heavier and heavier came the blow, till the lee decks were well awash, almost up to the dory nests. Burberry scanned each halliard, each brace and ratline; everything satisfied him but the top'n lift. It was too tight, and made a curving hump in the main-sail.

"Slack away on yer lee lift!" as Bim shuffled aft in his oil-skins. The man crawled on the boom like a monkey, cast off three turns on the cleat.

"How's that, sir?"

"Well 'nough."

"Well it is!"

"She do handle gentle, Bim!"

"Ay, Mister Burberry, she's easy nor a catboat in a ten-knot breeze."

Farther and farther she leaned, ripping through the waves, almost leaping from one to another. Burberry became anxious.

"Don't know her well 'nough yit to carry on no longer!" he decided, and went below, reappearing in a few moments, the skipper at his heels. Johnson took one long look at everything, satisfaction beaming on his face in the failing afternoon light.

"Call both watches, Mr. Burberry, an' let's see how they pull together."

"All ha-a-nds on de-eck!" the mate's voice rumbled into the fo'castle, startling the men.

"Bundle up, ye cod-haulers, shake yer feet now. I'm awaitin' to see ye hustle!"

The lookout struck one bell as Burberry finished. Larz punched the Nova-Scotian, who still slept through the thunder of the mate's voice, "All han's he saise!"

Rubbing his eyes with one hand, McCloud

jerked a boot on with the other. The call for both watches means something on a fishing-schooner, and men do not question when it comes.

Clambering like great apes, the crew poured out of the black hole, sniffing the breeze, fastening their oil-skins. They stood at absurd angles on the heaving deck, swinging with the half rolls and quick dips of the schooner. Johnson was watching, pleased at the men's quickness.

"Take *in* yer main-top'sl, Mr. Burberry, claw up yer fore, down flyin'-jib!"

"Ay, ay, Cap'n!"

Roaring through his hands, the mate's voice carried above the whining scream of the wind and the angry snarling of the sea.

"In main-t'sl! Stand by yer down-haul!"

The men scurried about, then waited in their places.

"*Haul!*"

Backs swaying to McCloud's "Och-hai-y-och-hai! Och-hai-y-och-hai an' heave-o!" the men pulled lustily.

Flapping, snapping, gyrating, the main-top-

sail came to the deck, and was instantly rolled up, twined, and stowed away.

"Damn good!" Johnson whispered.

"Now, then, two hands ter claw up the fore-t'p'sl; an' make it good fast!" Burberry bellowed after the figures that swarmed up the ratlines.

"On deck?" came a voice from the mast-head.

"Aloft?" the mate answered.

"An'ther hand up here! She's kickin' bad!"

Larz Ansen was on the ropes already. A silence, the three men, shapes only against the sky, tugged and jerked.

"Leg-go yer gaff!" from the heights. Booming with heavy reports, the triangular canvas flung away to lee'ard.

Johnson watched keenly. Foot by foot the three brought it in, gripping the folds as they gained them with accustomed fingers. The top-sail was "clawed up" securely. The three were on deck in a moment.

"In flyin'-jib! Stan' by yer halliards!"

The men were there.

"HAUL!"

Swishing, dragging for a moment in the sea,

the jib was dragged down, snaps unhooked from the wire guy by the men on "striker chains," and stowed away in the sail-locker aft.

"That 'll do, men!"

One by one they dropped into the black hole of the fo'castle, the port watch remaining.

"How's that fur quick an' able handlin', Cap'n?"

"Bully good, Mr. Burberry; I compleement ye on yer crew!" The skipper took a look at the binnacle, then glanced into the darkness that shrouded the seas. "Take single reefs ef ye think best afore my watch!"

"Ay, ay, Cap'n!"

Johnson was ensconced at the fore-topmast-head, sweeping the near shores and arms carefully with his glasses. The schooner moved along with scarce a ripple in the evening breeze, all canvas set. Just ahead, Blow-me-Down Mountain loomed gray and grim at the entrance to the Bay of Islands, west coast of Newfoundland. The rugged heights of land, still bleak

from a savage winter's grip, rose out of the calm sea, tier on tier of crags and pinnated rock-hills that reached towards the tinted skies, raggedly broken. The skipper took another long look and swarmed to the deck.

"Cain't see th' lights yit, Mr. Burberry," he muttered. He paced up and down nervously, glasses to his eyes often. "Slack away on yer sheets, we don't want to git in sight afore dark!"

"Slack a-w-ay! Quiet, me lads—e-asy!" as the great blocks complained shrilly. The mate's voice was a much subdued roar, and a feeling of mystery, of the necessity for silence, pervaded the men, both watches, that clustered in the bows, whispering.

The *Lucky's* speed abated; she barely moved now. Darkness fell swiftly, the shore-line melting away.

"Port a trifle!"

"Po-ort," the man at the wheel growled, softly.

"Steady as ye go!"

"Ste-ad-y!"

The loom of Blow-me-Down was over them.

"Your lights ready, Mr. Burberry?"

In answer the mate lifted a piece of canvas. Three white lanterns glimmered brightly, a length of line between each.

"You may hoist 'em, as I told ye to, an' remember—once to th' mast-head, an' the next hoist, half-way 's near as ye kin make it!"

"Right, sir!"

With his own hands, Burberry swung the lanterns, one under the other, a fathom apart, into the blackness overhead. Like stars they went up with steady motion, and stopped, seemingly very far away. They shone there for several moments.

"Down!" Johnson whispered, glasses focussed on a certain spot ashore where tiny lights of houses flickered dreamily. The three came to the deck by the run. All hands waited, peering over the flatness.

"He's thar! Again, Mr. Burberry!"

As the lanterns swung up, stopping half-mast, a light came to the water's edge beyond, then whirled rapidly in a circle; so fast that it seemed a ring of fire.

"That 'll do!"

When the three lanterns were stowed away the skipper wet his finger, so light was the breeze, to get the wind.

"Port four points!"

"—f'r p'ints!" echoed the helmsman, his face bent close to the crack in the binnacle doors, the streak of yellow light falling on his chin, nose, and the middle of his forehead with curious effect.

The schooner gurgled on, absolute silence on board. She carried no lights; Wong had even put out his galley-fire, lest sparks might show above deck.

"Bring her into th' wind an' let her drift!"

Motionless, the *Lucky* waited, a dim, white thing, as though carved in stone.

"Damned lucky Stuart to Sydney told us 'bout the revenooer bein a-tween Fischell's an' Hawks Bay!" Johnson whispered.

"Ain't we 'Lucky'?" the mate murmured. Both chuckled. "Ay, an' I hope we'll be lucky 'nough ter git bait here, Cap'n!" Burberry pushed up close to the skipper, straining

his eyes shoreward as he spoke. Johnson shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

"Didn't I telegrapht to Jack Nicholls, private code, an' 'ain't he answered 'y shore? Bait, man!" he snorted under his breath, "Bait! We'll git 'nough ter take half the cod on Sou'-east Bank!"

"A' right, Cap'n, bein's you say so!"

The thud—thud—thud of oars, muffled by some material, came to them. Johnson struck a match, and as it flared, put it out. In a few moments a dusky shape crept out of the darkness. The small boat came alongside.

"Hello, Jack!"

"How's things, Capping?"

The man below held on by the chain-plates.

"Got my wire?" The skipper, Yankee fashion, answered a question by asking one.

"Ay, zor!"

"Come aboard an' hev' a drop!"

"Must git back, Capping, right quick!"

"Whar's the bait? Will ye git it off tonight?" Johnson leaned over the rail in his eagerness.

"Can't give ye a herrin', Capping!"

"Jack, I *gotter* have it!" The skipper's face went white.

"Ye knows th' noo law, Capping. I'd sell ye bait right quick, fur ye've allus treated me voine, but I dassen't!"

"Hell's flames . . ." Johnson's fury echoed itself in a string of hissed oaths. "What ails ye?" he finished.

"'Tis voine to swear, Capping, but when I tells 'un t'at de revenoo ship es yonder in t' bay, an' dat de cus'om officer es a-talkin' wi' my darter in th' settin'-room o' my house, ye'll see why I canno' give ye bait!"

"Damnation!" Johnson staggered. "What th' hell's he doin' in yer house?"

"T' operator's in wi' 'em, I guess, an' when yer code comed, he give th' trick away. I puts a good bottle o' whiskey befront 'un, one o' them ye give me two year gone, an' sets me best-lookin' gurrl on 'un! He's safe fur a bit 'y time."

The men, listening intently, grumbled.

"Big-haul v'yge this is goin' ter be!" McCloud whispered, sarcastically.

Johnson thought with all his wits.

"It's O.K., Jack, boy. I'm obliged to ye, fur I knows ye'd give me bait ef ye could. I'll have ter try Hawks Bay! S'posin' you telegraphts—"

"Th' revenooer's a-comin', Capping— Goo'-night, an' luck to ye!" The small boat vanished to the *clu-uck—swi-ishle* of oars hurriedly pulled. "Take de east course, Capping, fur God's sake!" The voice came eerily out of the night, wafted to the schooner by the freshening breeze. As one man, twenty-two faces stared up the bay.

Advancing through the blackness, a green, a red, and a white light moved steadily. All hands were bewildered. The skipper "came to" first.

"Git wind into her!" he grunted. The schooner's bows paid off and the breeze filled the jibs, forcing her away.

"West b' south!" Johnson ordered.

"West be so'!"

The *Lucky* gathered headway rapidly, sliding through the water with clean furlings. The lights of the houses faded away and the gleam of the whale-factory's try-sheds dwindled, blink-

ing. A red light only showed astern then, as the schooner passed the outer bay, running almost free. It, too, disappeared.

"Lucky ag'in, an' onlucky!" Johnson growled.

"Fooled th' stinkin' gov'nment that time!" the mate answered, joyously, as the schooner ran merrily into the Straits of Belle Isle.

The crew, men of simple minds, forgot that there was no bait; thinking only of having outwitted the "gov'ment," a subdued cheer rose forward.

"Quiet there!"

The *Lucky* droned ahead on a calm sea, a strong breeze abaft the beam.

"They must be right whare we hove to!" the mate chuckled.

"We slipped away from 'em that trip, but what about *bait?*" Johnson shook the mate in his disappointment, as though the latter could help.

Burberry scratched his ear, nonplussed.

"We don't want ter go back to Glou'ester fur bait?" he remarked, tentatively.

"Oh, you softy, Mr. Burberry!" The skipper

nearly danced with rage, to the amused delight of the man at the wheel. "Shake out a few reefs in yer mind, an' h'ist yer balloon-jib o' thought! Do ye s'pose Sam Johnson's agoin' ter let on he's beat jest becaus' o' a putrefyin', dod-rotted law got up by thet female dog-fish minister?" He laughed shrilly in sarcasm. "Not till th' seas git higher 'n yon moon! Not till th' Straits o' Belle Isle be dry 's the back o' yer hand, Mr. Burberry, so 's ye kin walk dry-foot f'om Newfoundl'nd to Labrador, same 's they tell 'bout th' Red Sea an' Solomon or some other feller!"

The mate acquiesced weakly to this passionate outburst. "You're skipper 'n o' this craft, Cap'n. Whar be ye agoin' ter try next?"

Johnson was appeased by the non-combativeness of his under officer. He forgot his dignity so far as to pat the mate on the back.

"Hawks Bay, Mr. Burberry — Hawks Bay! If th' breeze holds we'll be off th' mouth tomorrer 'bout six 'clock!"

"Ain't there a custom offeecial thar?"

"Ay, but I kin toone up his fiddle! Least-

ways I used ter could when I wanted to sell a keg o' French rum f'om St. Pierr'!" Johnson added, under his breath.

"Cap'n!" the mate hitched his trousers in embarrassment.

"Spit it out here!" The skipper's frame of mind was none too pleasant.

"Ye'd best say a word for'ard, sir; th' men aire commencin' ter growl."

Johnson leered at the other in the clear moonlight.

"Growlin', ye say?"

He stalked forward and dropped on the forecastle ladder as softly as a cat. He stopped, listening to the murmur of voices.

"Damee allee samee nicee Capping!" he heard Wong say.

"You be blasted, ye pig-tailed monkey! He's a damn fool to come out'n Glou'ester wi' only twenty barrel o' bait!"

Johnson heard the cook's hiss of fury.

"You allee vellee finee number one doreeman, Fled! But you no callee Wong pigee-tail monkee!"

"W'at yer gabblin' 'bout?" the rough voice sneered.

"Me no gabblee, Fled! Wong say Capping finee Capping!"

"Just ye ke'p quiet!" Larz Ansen's deep voice thrumbled in the smoke-ladened interior.

Johnson dropped to the bottom of the ladder. The men stared aghast.

"Look a-here, lads," he thumped on the mess-table vigorously, "I'll have no more o' yer grumblin' an' growlin' an' fuss-makin'! *No more o' it, I say!*" The skipper was thoroughly angry; he shook his fist in a circle towards the bunks. "Ye doubtin' ijjiots, keel-haul ye fur a boat's-load o' tommy-cod; cast yer ears loose to *me!* I'll—git—ye—bait—an'—plenty—of—it! An' I don't want ter hear another whisper f'om ye, God dang yer coward hearts!" He breathed deep and long. No answer from the bunks. "R'mber what I tells ye, lads! I'll git bait!"

He was on deck again, sucking in the clear night wind with great draughts of his lungs.

"Take your course fur River o' Ponds Point, Mr. Burberry!"

"Ay, ay, Cap'n!"

"An' I don't think ye'll hav' any whisper reachin' f'om the men! I'll hav' a snack now. Keep her to her course!"

Johnson was hardly below when the cook scuttled aft, dishes in his hands.

"Bitee bully nice ham, Capping? Slim-Jimee picklee too, vellee finee!"

Wong was much agitated because of the skipper's advent forward. He slid about the table ingratiatingly, his pig-tail *sw-i-ishing* in the stillness of the cabin.

"You like, Capping?" His narrow, expressionless eyes were focussed on Johnson.

"All right, Wong—first rate!" The skipper ate heartily while the Chinaman watched, filling the "Capping's" grog tumbler from time to time; pouring coffee into his huge cup as its contents were exhausted.

"Say, Wong—" Johnson leaned back comfortably, filling his pipe—"what's wrong for'ard, eh?"—

The cook fidgeted, playing with the frayed end of his braid.

"You see, likee this, Capping," he murmured, his eyes on his hands: "Fisheeman fellee think no bait fo' makee catchee cod, an' fisheeman fellee mad. Say, 'Hellee, Capping that have no bait!' Wong say, 'Capping gettee bait sure,' an' fellee swear at Wong—nastee swear!"

The skipper laughed at the Oriental's quaint description. "What else, Wong?"

The Chinaman stood on one foot, then on the other, smoothing his shirt-tails.

"Wong no tell, Capping!"

Johnson was on him with a bound. "Speak up, ye yeller devil—speak up, or I'll—" He let go his grip as the cook swung a pair of innocent eyes on him.

"Not muchee fo' tell; fellee fo'lald say Capping lose shippee once."

The skipper winced.

"Get out!" he ordered, gruffly; "yer O. K., Wong!" he added, as the cook legged it quickly up the companion-way.

He thought in the silence then, that was

broken only by the *cre-a-k—cre-e-ek* of timbers as the schooner lifted and fell to the long rollers in the Strait. A long time he pondered.

"So they're a-throwin' th' loss o' th' *Susan J.* agin me, are they? Well, I'll show—"

"Capping excloose?" The cook, slipperless, stood at his elbow.

"Well, man, what's the matter?"

"Not'ing mattee. Wong want say he vellee much like you, Capping, an' what Chineeman can do, he much glad—fo' Capping!"

Johnson, by years of experience and contact with the rough characters of the sea that hailed from every corner of the world, had learned the priceless art of knowing when men were sincere. He felt it instinctively, and the cook's timid offering of assistance appealed to his kindly nature.

"Thank ye, Wong; ef thar sh'uld be occasion, I'll call on ye."

The Chinaman beamed gratefully.

"Wong leadee, Capping, any time. Pullee dory, haulee cod, blow horn—go up sail, mabbee, you say so." He grinned affably and vanished.

"Bait! An' where to get it!" Johnson talked aloud in his anxiety. "God! it means everythin' to me an' to th' lads! I can't throw away a whul' trip becaus' o' this damned law, an' I hain't got th' money ter buy bait on th' mainland!" He sighed heavily. "Wall, I'll see House ter Hawks Bay; by gravvy, he *must* have herrin' he can let me put aboard!" Through the hours of his watch below, he filled his pipe often and smoked hard, feet cocked on the table.

The schooner leaned more and more, the sound of waters whirling past, filling the cabin with liquid noise.

"Bonne Bay in sight, sir!" the mate called down.

He got into his reefer and went on deck. A strong southerly breeze forcing her ahead rapidly, the *Lucky* droned through the choppy seas with splutters of foam. Shadowy figures of the watch were grouped for'ard, and the form of the man at the wheel stood out clearly against the star-bright heavens. To starboard, far away yet in the glimmering night, lights flickered from a background of towering mountains.

"Will ye run in, Cap'n, on th' chance o' bait from somebody?"

"No, Mr. Burberry." The skipper remembered a man whose nets he had lifted on one trip when he was hard-pressed for bait. "He'd telegrapht Bay o' Islands *sure* ef he saw *me* in thar!" he muttered.

"Hold yer course as ye go!" Johnson peered at the binnacle. "Ye'd ought to make Espèrance afore daylight!"

A pall of dense, heavy fog shrouded the Labrador coast from Mingan to Cape St. Lewis, hanging low to the water, rolling in huge volumes when puffs of wind came through it.

"T' foag es bad, Kyrie!" Jack Ellison grumbled, trying to pierce the thickness.

The woman came to the door, wiping her hands on her mattress-cover apron.

"Zure she be, lad! 'Un canno' fush this day!"

From the dampness came the muffled and sullen roar of the ground swells, breaking on the bar, and at their feet the waters of the Forteau

dashed their fresh, cold strength into the salt of the ocean, tinkling and furling eerily, invisible.

"An' t' herrin'?" the man muttered. "What be I to do wi' 'un, when t' gov'ment will no let t' Bankers buy f'om we poor 'uns?"

"'Tis 'un bad besiness, Jack, zure!" She leaned against him affectionately. "T' God 'll show 'un how t' do wi' t' herrin'!" she whispered.

"'*Un'll* have to!" he growled. "I's worked an' hauled, an' worked an' hauled 'un handed, Kyrie! Thar's forty barrel ahind net-house, an' mabbe thirty barrel ter Wreck Cove. Seventy bar'l, woman, an' a' fur nawthing!" He clinched his great hands. "'Tis a' verra easy fo' 'un men ter St. John's ter *make* de laws. Jack Ellison 'd like ter see 'un coome on t' Labrador an' *live* by 'un!"

"T'at be true, lad, but 'un canno' do nawthin'! Might's well be cheerful, man; we'll feed t' dogs an' ha' plenty t' eat whatever!"

"Goin' fishin', dad-da?"

Ellison lifted the child that hugged his knees, with a toss, and set him on his shoulder.

"No, To'mie, dad-da canno' fush; dinno ye see t' foag's bad?"

The boy stared into the mists. "Zure she be, lad!" mimicking his mother's words. They laughed. He put the child down suddenly.

"What be yon?" he muttered, leaping from the door.

Sw-u-v-ngrr — bo-o-om — swi-i-ish — fs-s-sh! came from the impenetrable fog as the seas rolled in. Ellison listened with all his might.—*Poo-oop—poo-oop—poo-oop!*—silence.

"'Tis 'un Banker comin', Kyrie! I knaws 'un's horns."

They waited in anxious suspense.

"Mabbe 'un's wantin' bait an' commed in under t' foag!"

The breeze freshened a little, but it was not strong enough to lift the fog.

"Take de dory an' go see 'un?" she suggested, as the horn of a sailing-vessel sounded very near. The words were hardly spoken when a series of short toots came softly. Ellison ran down to the beach, shoved off a small dory, and pulled

into the fog, the woman listening to the crackle of the thole-pins till they faded away.

"Ma-ma, w'a'ss coomed o' de man as saved dad-da in t' bo-at?" The boy gazed into her eyes earnestly.

"Cap'n Johnson, To'mie?"

"A'! da's 'un!"

"T' God knaws, To'mie, w'ere 'un be. I prays 'un be safe some'ere. Cap'n wass 'un voine man!"

Ellison pulled lustily on his oars, the dory's bow crinkling the breasts of the swells. Now and then he stopped to listen. Everywhere the blanket of fog—fog—fog. Clammy and chill it breathed against him, curling about with cold dankness. His hair dripped with moisture, and his rough knuckles were shining wet.

Po-o-oop! close to him. He swung to his right and pulled on.

"Ahoy, boat!"

The voice came out of the overhead mysteriously. He "wayed 'nough," holding his oars.

"Hillo!" he shouted, the shadow of great sails growing into shape above him in the mist.

"That you, Jack Ellison ?"

The fisherman nearly bounded from his thwart.

"Bless 'un, 'tis de Cap'n!" And he hauled powerfully in his starboard oar, flinging the dory alongside the schooner.

Johnson chuckled over the rail.

"Come 'board, lad!—Thar, Mr. Burberry, I told ye I'd find him, fog or no fog!"

"You're a' right, sir, shiver me, but y'are!"

"Heave a line to him for'ard, you!" Johnson called.

Ellison made fast to his anchor-cleat and swung himself to the schooner's deck.

"I'm glad to see ye ag'in!" Johnson gripped the fisherman's hard hand.

"I be glad to see 'un, too!" Ellison answered, squeezing in return.

"Hav' ye got any bait, Jack ?" Johnson's voice trembled with agitation. "I've tried Bay o' Islands, didn't darse go inter Bonne Bay, an' found no herrin' to be got ter HawksBay; they're *all* a-skeared to give me bait, an', Jack man, I *must* have it! Curse this noo law thet don't give a' 'Merican a chancst fur a livin'!"

The Labradorian smiled, then burst into a hearty laugh. "Bless 'un, 'Cap'n, I got seventy bar'l ye kin hav'!"

The skipper seemed to swell up with pride and relief. "*Now*, Mr. Burberry, mabbe you'll *believe* Sam Johnson!"

The mate shrank from the blaze in Johnson's eyes.

"Ay, ay, Cap'n!" he murmured.

The crew for'ard managed to hear, and a faint sound of a cheer rose.

"Ye doubtin' Thomases, you! Dang ye, git to work, every spawn o' ye, an' fetch th' bait aboard! Whar' is 't?" to Ellison.

"Forty bar'l here, an' thirty bar'l ter Wreck Cove," the fisherman answered.

"Same price?"

"A', Cap'n; ef 't were no fur t' woman an' To'mie I'd gie it to '*un*, an' glad to!"

Johnson pulled a roll of money from his hip-pocket. "Seventy bar'ls—that's right, I guess?"

Ellison took the money without counting it, and tucked it away in his rough shirt-bosom. "I'll take what you say's right, Cap'n!"

"We're 'bout two hundred yards off the river-mouth, ain't we, Jack?—by the sound o' th' water."

Ellison listened. The murmur came faintly through the fog that hung on, denser than ever. The long crash of the rollers on the bar to port seemed far away; the pauses between each sea —the deepest of silences. Hove to, the schooner drifted slowly in the light wind, her canvas fluttering.

"For'ard there! Clear away yer starb'd anchor—the light one; tail that inch hawser to it an' lower away!"

"Ay, ay!" from several voices.

Johnson peered at the water, barely visible.

"Curse it!" he grumbled; "damn curious this fog don't lift wi' th' breeze!"

"'Un'll h'ist p'utty quick!" The fisherman smelled the air. "Goin' git a so'ther by this night!"

The skipper laughed, putting his hand on the other's dripping shoulder.

"Jack, d'ye mind when you an' me was in th' breeze from th' *nor'ard?*"

"Yiss, Cap'n, I mind, fur t'at wass de trip 'un left we!"

"D'ye git home all right?"

"Zure—widout fush, nor ballust, nor Cap'n! T' woman she wass sorry t' Banker tuk ye!"

"An' how 'bout the winter? Did ye make out not too bad?"

Ellison's giant fingers thrubbed on the rail. "Yiss," he answered, slowly, "not too bad, on'ee we loss a bit'y girl!"

"The hell ye say! What went wrong? I'm most sorry, Jack!" The skipper's voice was full of sympathy.

The Labradorian hesitated again.

"I wass alone, Cap'n, an could no' leav' t' woman t' git help fur t' child!"

Johnson's eyes were moist. "Ef I'd bin thar' we'd have saved the kid!" he whispered to himself.

Ellison was staring out into the walls of denseness.

"Four hands git two dories out an' go for th' bait wi' Jack here!" The skipper pulled himself together, drawing his hand furtively across his eyes.

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"Will 'un coome t' house, Cap'n?"

"Not yet, Jack; I'll stay aboard an' keep watch on th' breeze. When th' bait's stowed I'll slip in wi' ye fer a few minutes ter see Kyrie; I got a kinder dress or suth'in' my missus sent her!"

"Bless 'un, Cap'n; 'un's allus be'n good to we!"

The fisherman dropped into his dory, and the sounds of the three making for shore became fainter and fainter in the mist.

"Shall I take th' jibs off'n her, Cap'n? She's slatin' a mite on th' guys."

"I guess we'd better keep her clo'es on, Mr. Burberry; no tellin' what this breeze 'll do. She's gettin' colder every second, an' we wants ter be able to hoist anchor an' scoot ef it blows up strong th' way it *kin* do suddint on this coast."

"Ay, sir!"

"By gravvy, Mr. Burberry, we gave the revenooer the go-by, didn't we?" Johnson snickered with glee, tapping the palms of his hands together.

"We did, no mistake! *Now* we're on easy street wi' plenty bait!" The mate was more than affable; he was almost servile, and his admiration for the skipper knew no bounds. "Shiver me, Cap—"

"Hark, man, shut up!" Johnson leaned over the rail, listening intently. The mate swung his best ear to wind'ard.

Chug—chug—chug—chug! From the vast nothingness of the fog the steady throb of a screw floated down to them. The skipper looked at the mate. The mate stared at the skipper. The crew, whose ears had caught the sound, gazed at each other.

Johnson breathed hard. "'Tis the revenooer!"

The mate nodded. "We're a long sight inside th' three-mile!" he groaned; "an' caught buyin' bait!"

The skipper snarled angrily, with ugly noises in his throat. "Now, by God! ef this ain't th' unluckiest *Lucky*—"

"Steady, Cap'n; never go back on yer ship!" The mate hated to hear his vessel cursed.

They heard the clang of the engine-room bell then, so near was the little gun-boat.

"Stand by your anchor!" The call was weird, coming to them from an invisible source.

Clink—clang-et-y—clang! The noise of water violently churned was to leeward of them.

"Let go!"

And the rattle of a chain hurtling through its hawse-pipe pierced the fog sharply.

Johnson, for an instant, was bewildered. Visions of having a crew put aboard his vessel, and of being sailed to St. John's, there to pay a fine that would mean ruin, rose before him. And then the shame! To be caught breaking the law, and to lose everything by it! He listened unconsciously to the voices beyond, perfectly audible.

"He's either here or in Wreck Bay, Salisbury."

"More likely anchored under the Point, in this fog. He'll try for bait everywhere he gets the chance, sir!"

"We'll put a stop to it, man, and get this Yankee into St. John's for a heavy fine, eh?"

The masterly voice echoed against the schooner's sails. "Have the men get their dinner, Salisbury, and clear a boat away afterwards. There is a small village here, as I remember the place?"

"Ay, sir."

"I will go ashore and find out if the *Lucky* has been seen in these waters!" The voices were silent, but so close was the government vessel that the puffing of her pump exhaust was plainly heard on the schooner.

"Livin' divvil!" Johnson whispered to the mate. "Those cusses 'll hear th' dories comin', *sure*, an' we're ketched in th' act!" He started towards the bows, and stopped, hearing a slight creak. He stared over the side anxiously, half expecting to see the gun-boat's cutter.

"*Sst!*"

Ellison, the other two dories towing behind his, stood up carefully, clutching the chain-plates.

"Yon's 'un gov'mint ship! I hear 'un when we wass loadin' t' bar'ls! Got t' be quick, Cap'n, ef 'un wants t' git away; t' fog 'll h'ist p'utty soon!"

"Good fur you—easy!" the skipper sighed, as the three dories ranged carefully beneath him.

Barrel after barrel was lifted to the deck and lined up on the port side, the crew, shoes off, working desperately in silence. An idea came to Johnson. He tiptoed his way to the galley.

"Wong?"

"Yass, Capping?"

The cook was busy below among his pots and kettles, getting dinner ready.

"I want ye now—*important!*"

"Allee light, Capping!"

"Thar's the revenooer jest on to us, an' she'll have us in a hour 'cause th' fog's liftin'! I want yer ter git into a dory, row ashore, then pull out to 'em, makin' a hell of a racket. Tell 'em th' *Lucky* left ye when ye was ashore for wood, see? I'll put kindlin's in the dory. Tell 'em we heard 'em comin' an' made sail, leavin' ye behind. They'll believe, 'cause ye 'r' th' cook, an' the damned fools 'll think we wouldn't leave our cook 'less 'twas a case o' hustle! Lie yer best, now, Wong; make 'em put ye ashore at White Bay; I'll pick ye up there!"

"What fellee makee glub fo' fisheeman?"

"Never mind that! Get a move on!"

"Yass, Capping, Wong helpee you!"

As he was, in a light shirt, sandals loose on his feet, the cook slipped into a dory and vanished in the fog, shoreward.

Ellison, the skipper, Burberry, and all hands listened in suspense. Soon came the violent thump of oars.

"Boat ahoy! what boat's that?" from the watch on the gun-boat.

"Slay, you fellee on shootee ship, me Wong, cookee on damnee *Lucky;* want come on shipee!" The Chinaman's voice squeaked vigorously.

Silence on the gun-boat. Then another voice, the commander's, evidently:

"Where is the *Lucky?*"

"Gonee, mabbee three hour time. Wong rowee, rowee, rowee, no catch; Wong muchee mad!"

"Heave up alongside, then."

More sounds of thole-pins energetically pulled, and the bump of a small boat against a big one.

"Allee samee vellee 'blige!"

"What were you doing ashore?"

"Chineeman gettee wood—see?" the noise of the kindlings being kicked about.

"Take his dory aboard, aft!"

The call of men lifting a weight by the falls was loud in the fog.

"Where did the *Lucky* go?"

"Wong thinkee gone St. Pierree; hear Capping say no get baitee 'clause o' dammee you; go St. Pierree!" The Chinaman's voice was muffled by the boats on the davits of the ship. "Slay boss shootee ship, Wong t'ink *Lucky* gone White Bay *gettee bait!*"

"Up anchor, Salisbury, quickly! We'll catch that Yankee this time, thanks to our Chinese friend!"

The slow *bang — thrut — thrut!* of chain sounded softly. *Clang—clang!* Waters boiled beyond with foaming sound.

"He's a treasure, that Chink!" Johnson whispered, as the gun-boat thrubbled away.

"West by south!" The voice from the ship's bridge came plainly to them, though vagued by distance.

Then all was still, save for the breaking swells on the bar and the mutter of the river as it rushed into the ocean.

Every man, as one, wiped sweat from his face, though the air was raw and very cold.

"Guess it couldn't have been much closer!" The skipper's voice was trembling from the strain.

"'Un want to move quick, Cap'n, t' fog 'll h'ist afore yon vessel turns t' P'int! She's furlin' a'ready."

The mists were rolling faster as the breeze increased; now and then they lifted from the surface for an instant.

"Hurry ashore, Jack, fur th' rest o' the barrels! I'm *here* now, and I'm *agoin' to have them!*"

The dories vanished, and the sound of oars lasted till the rattle of wood on the beach came back.

"Get your anchor up-an'-down for'ard, overhaul your sheets, an' see that everythin's right to scoot."

"Drawin' round to th' sou'west, Mr. Bur-

berry?" and Johnson seemed to listen for wind, his eyes intent on the fog clouds.

"Ay, sir, an' it 'll come heavy when it do strike." The mate looked aloft.

The schooner's canvas set tightly, shrunk to a clean fit by the dampness. The leech of the main-sail fluttered slightly, with a clucking sound. Moving here and there, rapidly the fishermen coiled the sheet-ropes afresh, and a slow "Yo—heave-o—heave—*o!*" came from rough throats as the *Lucky's* trim forefoot was brought over her anchor, the hawser chafing on the lower end of the striker-guy with little rubbings. Johnson went below, and from the dim recesses of his huge iron-clamped box brought out a package.

"Kyrie Ellis-on," he read, haltingly, in the vague light of the cabin. "That's it," he muttered. "Wish I could git ashore to give it to Kyrie myself. She was damned good to me when I lost the *Susan J.*"

"Cap'n?" the mate's voice interrupted his reverie.

"On deck?"

"The fog's liftin' fast, sir, and the dories are 'most aboard!"

Johnson sprang up the companion-way, clutching the bundle.

The surface of Forteau Bay was visible for many yards about the schooner, and the wind (southwest it was) hummed in the rigging with forlorn whinings.

"It's a good nine mile to th' Point, an' that old tub won't go over seven knots."

Thinning fast, the fog drifted and whirled, and the long swells were heavily ruffled by the wind. The canvas slatted viciously now, to the continuous tattoo of the reef-points.

"She's driftin', sir!" from Bim Sharkey, his hand on anchor-hawser.

To leeward the dories, but faint shapes, came on as fast as their crews could move them.

"Pay out a foot at a time." Johnson was anxious again. "Th' revenooer hain't been gone more 'n half-hour, Mr. Burberry."

"We kin *run* from him in the breeze, Cap'n!" The mate was enthused with excitement. His

big, lean face quivered, and he pawed at his mustache nervously.

"Yesus!" Larz Ansen, in the ratlines, growled. "Ve be caughted sure yit!"

Fifty yards, then thirty, the dories were away. And the fog vanished, thickness by thickness, till the beach was visible.

"Come on, lads — come on!" Burberry shouted.

Shoulders heaving, bodies rising from the thwarts at each stroke, the men in the dories pulled all they knew how, their grunts of effort audible on deck.

McCloud hove a line to Ellison, and belayed as the latter hauled alongside by it.

The shore line at the river's mouth was visible now; the mists rushing away, driven by the wind that strengthened every moment.

"Pile 'em aboard!" Johnson called, watching to the westward, towards the Point. Breathing in hoarse gasps from their exertions, the men lifted the barrels.

"All on, sir!" Burberry moaned, so hard had he worked.

With a scream and a snarl, the sou'wester struck them, and the fog vanished as if by magic.

Under the Point, nearly around it, but in full sight yet, was the squat shape of the gun-boat, standing out clear and gray against the lifting seas.

"Here, Jack, this is fur your missus; catch!" Johnson flung the package, and the Labradorian, standing in his dory, caught it cleverly.

"'Un'll have to hurry, Cap'n! T'anks to 'un, an' good luck!"

"In with your anchor!—look sharp, lads!"

"Yo—heav'y-ho—yo—heave-o!" for some time.

"Cat-headed, sir!"

"Hard-a-port!"

The schooner's bows fell off swiftly, and the great sails filled, bellying in the wind. The *Lucky* heeled far over on her beam.

"I'll come to Wreck Cove if I needs the bait!" Johnson shrieked, leaning to the angle of the deck. Ellison, making for shore, waved his hand.

"Goo'-bye, Cap'n!—t'anks!"

"God, the revenooer sees us!" the mate cursed, twiddling his feet.

The gun-boat was putting about, describing a long circle towards them.

"To hell with 'em!" the skipper shouted. "I'll show 'em a trick or two! You, Ansen, stand by for sharp work!" he thundered to the big Swede at the wheel.

"Ay, ay!"

Her lee scuppers awash, the *Lucky* foamed ahead, apparently to cross the government vessel's bows. Mounting and descending the seas with light buoyancy, the schooner droned on, flinging spray to leeward that was whirled away as it rose. Johnson stood by the wheel; both watches were crouched in the bows, speculating on their chances; two hands made fast the dories. The barrels of bait chunked together.

"Ready—*'bout!*" Johnson helped on the spokes. "Climb her!" he hissed—"*climb her!*"

"Ay'm mountin' her!" Larz tugged powerfully. Every rag banging and thundering like great guns, the schooner came into the wind,

and fell away to the rollicking roar of waters under her bows.

The other shifted course accordingly.

"Keep her off a mite!"

"Off 'tis!" The Swede, all eagerness, handled his wheel neatly.

Nearer and nearer to the gun-boat.

"We'll have to take the chancst o' a shot!" Johnson screeched, his words barely audible to the mate above the yelling of the wind.

"Give it to her, Cap'n! They can't hit us, and don't dare, anyhow!"

A puff of yellow-green from the gun-boat, followed by a faint report.

Johnson put his fingers to his nose in derision. "You go to hell!" he shouted.

The schooner passed the other at furious speed, a mile to windward. The gun-boat headed into the sea then.

"Keep her off, ye divvil—*off!* Slack away your sheets!—look alive, ye lubbers!" Ropes groaning and creaking with the strain, the schooner bore away.

Pu-uff! A splash some hundred yards ahead showed where the shell struck.

"Hold her as she goes!" Johnson screeched.

"Ay, ay!"

Spray and frother flying over decks, the *Lucky* held on, careening to the stronger blows that came mercilessly from the tundra barrens of Labrador.

The gun-boat labored in the seas, great clouds of spume rising over her as she tried to cut across the schooner's course.

Pu-uff! again, and again the shell darted a streak of spray into the wind, yards ahead. Just their eyes over the windward rail, the twenty-two fishermen of the *Lucky* cursed and wondered.

"Ready-y—*'bout!*"

With ponderous slattings and a grudging way, the schooner faced the gale then leaned on her new course.

"We got him beat all to blazes!" Johnson yelled.

"Certain, Cap'n!" The mate was joyful, with the gun-boat a mile astern and to leeward.

"No cook! Who *kin* cook? The poor Chinee 'll catch it now!" the skipper grumbled. The schooner roared on, parting the seas with vicious hissings, flying over the gun-boat's former course.

"Don' know, Cap'n; make shift *somehow.*"

"*Man afloat a p'int to starboard!*"

Johnson and Burberry leaped to their feet, holding onto the rail. Ansen was right. Bobbing up and down on the crested waves was a black speck.

"Keep her away *hard!*" The *Lucky* fairly streamed through the water. The black speck grew into a man's head.

"'Tis Wong!" the mate yelled.

"Luff—an' luff some *more!* Stead-y!"

All hands stared at the head pitching and vanishing among the waves.

"Har-r-rd up! Toss him a line!"

Sails thundering, the schooner ate her way into the wind, passing the swimmer by a few scant feet. He caught the rope thrown by McCloud and was hauled aboard.

"Allee samee velly cold, Capping!" the cook chattered. "Shootee ship tinkee Wong makee big lie when see *Lucky*. Going a'lest Wong in i'longs. Wong see you clomen, an' makee jump ov'lee boa'd—wait fo' you!"

"I'm damned!" Johnson muttered. "Here's the cook aboard, an' we got plenty o' bait, an' the gov'ment's beat!"

"We're aboard th' *Lucky*, Cap'n!" Burberry's voice was superstitious, but glad.

"Take your course for Belle Isle Light, an' f'om there to th' Sou'east Bank!"

Johnson gave one look at the gun-boat, far astern now, pitching badly.

"You go to blazes!" he muttered. "Wong, get dry duds *on* ye, an' a grog *in* ye, an' give *me* some grub!"

"Yass, Capping!"

The Chinaman slid into his galley, while the schooner boomed on over the seas that rose steadily.

"Reef her, ef it gets much stronger!"

"Ay, Cap'n!"

"The world o' waters kin help beat the gov'-

ment." Johnson dashed the drops of salt from his eyebrows. One foot on the companion, he took off his oil-skin hat slowly, the wind ruffling and waving in his hair. "It looks as though God an' th' sea be a-tryin' to make up to me fur th' *Susan J.*"

His body shook with the pounding of the racing waves that flung themselves against the schooner.

"I 'ain't cursed it no more since Jack told me not to," he muttered, softly, his eyes reaching out across the vast wild scene, where crests dashed towards the low heavens, and sank again, a part of them flying with the gale, coating the tossing distances with snowlike drift.

"Th' world o' waters is my home, my life. I got to thank it, even ef it did take my *Susan J.*"

His lips moved silently then. Ansen watched him curiously.

"Ya, ya, Cap'n," he whispered to himself, "you be lucky."

"Stand by ter single reef yer main-s'l an'

fore-s'l!" The mate's stentorian bellow rose above the shrieking.

"The world o' waters!" Johnson sighed, a new light in his eyes, as he disappeared below, pulling the hatch to after him.

IV

THE LEAVING OF A DORY

THE skipper stood by the wheel indolently, letting the swash of the rudder push the spokes back and forth along his fingers.

The *Lucky*, with stay-sail and main-sail set, moved slowly eastward on the long, round-topped swells.

Out to starboard many specks against the calm appeared and vanished, as dories rose and fell on the seas.

The day was hot, sweating in the glare of the sun; and the horizon everywhere was hazy and dim, as though looked at through smoked glasses.

The deck of the schooner had lost its new, fresh look; blood-stains and the yellow taint of dried-up slime were apparent all over it. Scales

by the myriads clustered on the coamings of the fish-hatches, and a persistent stink of cod hung suffocatingly, made worse by the sun's strength.

"'Ain't lost a dory!" Johnson said, leaning against the gear-box of the wheel and thrusting a lean thumb in the arm-hole of his plaid waistcoat.

Wong Ling, the cook, snugly ensconced in the shadow of the companion-way, filled his little pipe with something that he took from a tiny bag hanging round his neck.

"We gottee plentee fish, Capping, too!" pushing the nail-pull into the slim bowl.

Johnson watched the Chinaman.

"Look-a-here, Wong; quit yer damned dope-smokin'!"

The cook looked up, a pained expression in his narrow eyes. "Wong no smokee d'lope, Capping. On'ee smokee velly nice tlink."

The skipper laughed. "It 'll velly nice fix you," he said, watching the dories in the distance as a hen watches her chicks.

"Make Wong biggee, fine, strong!" The

Chinaman sucked away, inhaling the faint blue fumes deeply.

"Strong—hell! Make you weaker 'n a shrimp an' a bigger fool than Bond hisself."

Lifting and rolling gently, the schooner crept towards the dories, a gentle murmur of froth at her bows. Little waves ran to port and starboard, disappearing far away, overpowered by the weight of the greater surge.

The cook stared at Johnson. "You white man no understan'ee Chineeman's tlink."

"No, and I don't want any sich 'think' as you've got in thet little pipe."

"Makee big mistlake, Capping! Wong have nicee think, an' gettee muchee long pleasule!"

The Chinaman's face grew white beneath the yellow as he puffed. His aloe eyes became black under the influence of the opium.

"Ah-h, Capping, Wong see beooful tlings now!"

The short figure twitched and trembled, and its voice was faint. "Wong see lovelee girlee in Chineeman's land; see flowels, smellee flowels, evly place — al' lound. Hea finee piece

music, Capping; kissee girlee, winee biggee lot d'llar fan-tan!"

The voice ceased; the cook sucked on mechanically, his eyes focussed on nothing, his brain working on things that were thousands of miles from the great Banks.

Johnson, in some mysterious way, was drawn by the glamour of the cook's words. "Damn!" he muttered, gazing aloft and clutching the wheel. "Damn the Chink!" He was fascinated, nevertheless, and listened to Ling's murmuring intently.

"W'lay fa' w'lay. Wong see heap money. Wong gettee; Wong velly much like. Me see greatee place whele watee jump upee—up an' shine; makee nicee noise; have muchee nicee feel!"

Johnson left the wheel and drew up his foot to kick the Chinaman. A puff of breeze came and the schooner leaned, falling off. He brought her to her course again, the dories showing nearer in the afternoon sun.

"Ye liar you!" he swore at the cook. "Ye said that it wouldn't lay ye up!" Contempt in

his eyes, he handled the wheel, favoring the gusts of breeze. "Ellison 'll be th' last aboard," he muttered, "an' it's a mighty good thing I got him fur this cruise. He's brought in more cod than the whul danged bunch—a'most."

Flat calm again, and Johnson turned to the Chinaman. The little pipe had dropped from his mouth, and from its bowl a wisp of smoke still rose straight and thin.

"He's done for some hours now, dod gast it! I shouldn't ha' let him smoke."

Then a draught blew the smoke towards the skipper, the sweet fumes reaching to his brain. He took firm hold of the wheel, staring towards the dories.

"Muchee longee pleasule!" he muttered, in a curious whisper.

He was tired out with long days of handling the schooner, alone with the cook, while the dories were away hauling cod. From morning till night it was tack and about ship, with sheets to be dragged at aft, while Wong, chanting in minor key, hauled on the jib-tackle. Then there was single reefing to do when the wind

came suddenly, he having the hard work, the cook handling the wheel.

For many days this had gone on, and he was worn with the strain—his body resting gratefully now, in the heat and calm of the afternoon.

The cook talked to himself in his own language, the words muffled, coming from far down in his throat. His eyes were closed, and the slim body lay relaxed on the hot deck.

Motionless then the schooner drifted. Johnson's eyes were on the little pipe that smoked on. No slightest breath of wind on the great wilderness of waters; only the huge rollers moved, their breasts mirror-like.

No sound save for the dry creak of sheet-blocks as the main-boom fetched up hard, and the dripping *sw-i-ish* when the ropes dragged out of water. Sailing free she had been; now that the breeze was gone the big stick wavered in short heaves, as though hesitating whether to rush across the schooner and jibe her. The sun was high above the water-line in the distance yet, its rays beaming with great heat on the surging ocean.

"Nobody 'll know," the skipper whispered. "I'm dead tired, an' it's a long time afore th' dories 'll be aboard. It 'll keep me awake, if I take jest a whiff or two!" He let go of the wheel, went over and picked up the pipe. "Nobody 'll know," he muttered again, watching the dories far away. With a deep inhalation, as he would smoke his own pipe, Johnson drew in the fumes. He waited, fingering the tiny, slender bowl. Nothing happened. He was as tired as ever, and the waters rolled in the same way to the creaks and bangings of blocks and halliards.

"Such stuff!" he snorted, taking a deeper pull on the little pipe.

He waited again, doubtfully. Then his eyes opened wide; a new strength came over him.

"It's great!" he said, aloud. "I'll have one more puff to keep good an' lively," sucking hard.

Silence for some minutes, the swells passing under the schooner with squirts of foam as they struck her freeboard.

The Chinaman talked on, his voice sounding eerily in the stillness of the waters.

"Look, man! look at those mountains!" Johnson murmured, leaning on the wheel. "Look at 'em!" he growled; "ain't they fine? See the snow on th' top of 'em, an' down alow th' green of trees, wi' valleys a-tween! Cain't you hear the brooks a-gurglin', same's they used to in ol' Vermont, whar I was born? Cain't you hear them birds a-singin', same's they did in th' apple-trees ter home?"

Eyes agleam, he listened. No answer but the sodden murmur of the sea against the schooner's sides.

"One more an' I'll be strong," he gurgled.

The pipe dropped to the deck when it left his lips.

"'Tis a band I hear a-playin' 'Home, Sweet Home.' I see women dancin'." His voice rose shrilly. "See the flowers, man; smell 'em—ain't they sweet?" His nostrils dilated. "Thar," he whispered, eyes still open—"thar's fields o' flowers, man; cain't ye see 'em? *I* kin. An' yonder—*look yonder* to them hills a-glistenin' wi' the sun on 'em! God, 'tis beau'ful!"

Johnson slipped to the deck, his figure sprawl-

"THE SKIPPER LAY QUIET, MUTTERING TO HIMSELF"

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ing inertly. The little pipe was out; no smoke came from its tiny, black-mouthed bowl.

The schooner, left to her own devices, swung erratically. A breeze came. The main-boom shivered across the deck, dragging the wet sheet-ropes across Johnson's face.

Bang! It fetched up with a smash, and the bows crowded into the breeze.

The skipper lay quiet, muttering to himself, and the cook kept up his weird monologue.

"T' schooner's a-comen, Bim."

Ellison pierced a half-herring with the great hook as he spoke. "T'ere's heaps o' light yet," he added, watching the bait vanish under the surface, the line whizzing softly through his fingers.

The dory drifted slowly along, lifting easily to the long swells from the northeast. Far away, rising out of the sea, as a cloud of white, the schooner shone in the sunlight, her hull invisible, only her canvas gleaming.

Sharkey swore as he pricked his finger against a cod's teeth.

"Fish-hooks an' tar!" he grumbled. "It's hot 'nough ter boil a lobster on th' rail in a dry bucket!"

"Fushin's good, zure," the big Labradorian answered, with a smile.

Bim looked at him. "Ay, an' it's always good fishin' wi' *ye!*" he growled. "Blame me if I don't think yer in wi' th' divvil o' th' Sea!"

Ellison's face was grave instantly. "You zhut up, Bim, a-talkin' o' t' Bad 'Un! Ef t' luck be wi' 'uns, be satisfy, and no talk 'bout t' Bad 'Un."

The other pulled in and hove a great cod on the dory's bottom.

"A' right, Jack; no o'fence, lad—no o'fence!" He baited, and cast the lead, his eyes on the schooner.

Nearer now she was, standing in hazed outline against the heat-blurred horizon.

"Hell of a skipper, to hold on, lettin' his boom thrash that-a-away!" Bim was ugly. "Look at them other dories," he grumbled, "away off thar t' th' west'ard; we'll be picked up last, as oosual!"

"Vhy for not?"—Ellison jerked a cod aboard

—"vhy for not? We-'uns get more cod t'an de rest o' de dories! De skipper leavin' us out longer; good thought, him!"

"What we got ter-day?"

Sharkey looked meditatively at the heap of cod on the low ballast.

"Mabbe couple hundred; most of 'em 'll go seven, nine pound an' more."

The other sneered. "We oughter got— Say, Jack, what ails the schooner?" he shouted, interrupting himself.

In the faint breeze the *Lucky* slid ahead uncontrolled; when a stronger puff came, she promptly hove-to and fell off as the wind decreased. Time and again she did this, her evolutions becoming frequent as the wind strengthened.

Ellison looked long and sharply. "Zomethin' wrong on 'un, Bim. 'Un's not actin' right."

"Oh, stow yerself!" The other knocked a huge cod on the head. "Th' Cap'n's aboard, an' Wong; that's a fine crew, if ye like. They'll take care o' us, don't worry yerself."

"Ah'm no worryint—on'ee t'inken."

Something in Ellison's voice made the other take his fingers from a cod's gills quickly. He, too, straightened up and watched the schooner.

The breeze was freshening fast; the long distance between the dory and the *Lucky* was crinkled, the little, rippling spurs running merrily on their sullen foundations, moving much faster than they. The sun seemed to lift away and became a sickly, pale circle of yellow. The schooner behaved more curiously than ever in the strong wind. She would come up into it with a good way and go about, then run free for a moment and jibe, heeling over when the boom brought up taut on the sheets.

Bim stared without speaking. "They must be asleep below, a-lettin' her strain everythin' that way." He took a chew as he spoke.

Ellison, leaning in the stern, a line in each hand, watched, anxiety in his eyes.

The nearest dory to them was a quarter of a mile away; Burberry and Larz Ansen worked it. Their figures, as mere specks, could be seen whenever one of them, or both, stood up to haul a heavy fish.

"'Tis strange th' mate do na notice," Jack said.

Sharkey hitched his oil-skin trousers a bit higher.

"Too busy tryin' ter git more fish 'n we do. I hearn th' skipper laffin' at 'im t'other watch by night."

"Zay, Bim, 'uns should go t' th' ship," Jack said, suddenly, as the schooner jibed and careened heavily.

"What for?" The other jerked a line. "We're doin' good biziness whar we be; let well 'nough alone. They'll wake up p'utty quick."

The two men fished steadily, while the breeze grew, the waves lifting till their crests broke over the dory's bows from time to time.

"We're movin' too danged fast," Sharkey began, making the four oars fast to the long painter.

"'Uns ought er go t' th' ship." Ellison was in earnest now.

"Stow yer gab, ye Labrador' galoot! Git to work an' fish!" Sharkey flung the drag-anchor overboard.

Ellison gave one look to windward. The blow

came hard, driving spray over them. Seeing what was coming, he sprang on the other.

"What ye doin'?" Bim shrieked, as Jack grabbed him.

"Will 'un go t' th' ship?" He was mad with fear that something had happened to the Captain.

"Quit yer damn foolin'!" his burly companion grunted; "this ain't no thayter!" He tried to loosen Ellison's hold on his wrists.

"*Will 'un go?*" the gaunt Labradorian growled.

"Not much! When we're 'high boat' an' fish's a-comin' the way they be! Leg-go, Jack; what ails ye?"

Ellison took his great hands from the other and hauled in on the painter.

The seas broke solidly aboard now, his weight in the bows.

To windward was a weird white-yellow wall that came on rapidly.

"Drop it!" Bim yelled, understanding the other's plan. "Drop it!"

Ellison hauled away powerfully. Sharkey

leaped at him, letting his lines drag over till they brought up to their fastenings on the cleats.

"What th' hell ye think yer doin' ?" he snarled, making a grab at the painter.

"'Uns'll go t' th' ship!" Ellison said, slowly, his mate's hand reaching past him, clutching the rope.

"Go to the schooner—nothin'!" the other cursed then, the oaths whirled away by the wind. "Th' schooner 'll come ter *us!*"

This, on top of his dread for the Captain, made Ellison forget himself entirely. The oath and his fear let loose his savage anger that lurks deeply in rough natures, and, because of its depth, tumultuous when roused, unrestrained then.

"Blast 'un!" He turned with the litheness of a wild beast, seized the other by the throat, and forced him backward across the bow thwart. Sharkey was very powerful. He writhed from Ellison's grip and twined his arms about the Labradorian's chest.

"Ye divvil, ye!" he screamed, fighting hard, crushing Jack's breath.

Ellison sank his great fingers into the other's bicep muscles, working them to and fro against the bone.

"Leg-go, damn ye, leg-go!" Bim screamed with pain.

The seas curled in over them, soaking their struggling bodies, and the wind fell before the white wall that advanced, reaching to the heavens in dense mass.

"Will 'un go t' th' ship *now?*"

"Ay; leg-go, ye murderin' fool!"

Ellison stood up, panting, watching the other rise slowly. Sharkey's face was out of shape with rage. Jack laughed at him, and turned to haul in on the painter again.

He heard a creak, swung like lightning, and met the heavy blow Sharkey struck on his arm.

Then his savagery took shape. He threw himself against him, knocking him into the stern-sheets by his weight.

He felt a sickening pain in his left hand. Sharkey's teeth sank in deeply, chewing at the flesh. Ellison tried to drag his hand away,

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but the other's teeth held. A dash of salt, the stinging drift passing up his nose, came. The dory labored heavily in the seas, tugging at her drag with jerks and tremblings. Out of his mind with pain and fury, Ellison felt round with his other hand for a weapon. The bait-knife was under his fingers. He clutched it, felt the other's throat, and raised to strike.

"No! t' God no let 'un!" he groaned, dropping the steel, and feeling further, all the while the awful agony of his hand in Sharkey's jaws. He couldn't get at the other because of the thwarts and tangle of lines. The knock-out stick for the cod came next. He grabbed it, shortening it in his right hand.

"*Will 'un let me go?*"

The other didn't answer, chewing on.

With all the strength in his body, Ellison brought the tough wood down on Sharkey's head, grunting with the impact. The teeth loosened; his left hand was free. Again and again he struck furiously, the blows sounding muffled and dull in the stillness.

The wind had gone. Over everything, hang-

ing on the rolling seas, the fog clung, damp and chill.

Ellison stood up, blood dripping from his hand mingling with the fish slime at his feet. Sharkey lay still, doubled up against the thwart, his feet twitching.

Jack breathed fast, his lungs working with great heavings under his ribs. Painfully, slowly, he got the drag alongside and hauled in the oars, then he listened.

Silence everywhere, but for the squash and splash of the dory as it rose and fell over the rapidly calming swells. He got two blades between the thole-pins and rowed, one hand causing him excruciating pain.

"T' rest 'll be lost thiss foag!" he murmured, pulling on, taking his course by instinct for where he had last seen the schooner.

"T' Cap'n? Hope un-t' God be no hurt!" he groaned, pulling ahead slowly, the dory rising buoyantly to the diminishing seas.

The weight of the unconscious man for'ard pulled her bows down too far; Ellison doubled the feet that stuck up, under the thwart, and

dragged Sharkey's body aft, till it rested under his own seat, sprawled in the salt and slime, the man's head on a big cod. Jack rowed slower and slower, listening for some sound of the *Lucky*.

"Zure t' Cap'n *must* be on deck by t' now!" he muttered, hoarsely.

Nothing but the *swash* and run of the ocean answered him, and the fog settled oppressive and dead on its surface. His hand ached badly; it was greatly swollen, so that he had difficulty in keeping hold of the oar. Sweat streamed from him, dropping off his eyebrows and chin. He looked at the man beneath.

"I be zorry t' hav' smashed' un so hard!" he said, "but I'll no take back-water f'om any man when t' Cap'n's in danger or wanting zomething to be did!" He pulled on, the strokes farther and farther apart.

"T' God!" he moaned, looking at his hand. "I'm t'inken 'un's pisened me!"

The whole palm was distended many times; the fingers standing from it like green bits of putty. Clotted blood hid the wounds on the

back and lower edge, but at the ends teeth-marks were apparent. It was a nasty, ragged tear. The big-boned wrist was beginning to inflame as he watched, and he felt deep throbbings to his shoulder.

"Hear 'uns zay az zalt be good." Ellison thrust his hand into the water. He stiffened all over, his heels kicking a tattoo on the bottom when the brine ate into the raw flesh, cleansing it. He held it there, his face set, and white as the fog about him, his eyes shining with the pain.

"'Un 'll do—oh, God!"

Tears flowed, and he rocked himself to and fro, the wounded hand clutched to his chest. It became numb then; he sighed at the relief.

"T' schoon'r's no far." He took up the oars and struggled ahead, forcing the dory over the long mountains of dirty green by slow, heart-breaking labor.

"Ah-o-y!"

His voice quavered in its strength and broke on the last note.

Silence—liquid silence. Only the soft hiss

and gurgle of the dory as it swung up and down. He pulled for more agonizing minutes; then drifted again.

"Ah-o-o-o-y!"

The sound of his call was taken up instantly by the mists, made useless by their sodden mass. His left arm was nearly powerless; the dory's bow veered to port when he rowed; he could *not* balance the strength of his arms.

A whiff of air struck his hot face. He sniffed quickly.

"T'ere's a blow comen'! T' sea's got me zure." He paused.

"Ah-o-o-oy on de *Luck-e-e-ee!*"

The breeze dimpled the shrouded waters. He blew a blast on his little horn then. The noise pierced but scant yards.

"T' Cap'n, t' Cap'n! Zome'at be wrong wi' 'un!" he whispered, taking up his oars once more. "T' schooner wass no far f'om—"

A huge shape grew out of the fog above him, towering into nothingness as the schooner ran up into the growing wind, slatting and quivering.

Ellison, the dory just under her bows, stared in unbelief for an instant; then he made a quick grab at the main-sheets that trailed past him when the schooner slid ahead by her impetus.

"Ah'oy, Cap'n!"—no answer.

Her bows fell off; the *Lucky* moved away, he holding on to the sheet-ropes. There was not enough wind yet to draw them taut, and he hauled himself alongside, slashed the painter free from the other pair of oars, took the end in his mouth, and clambered on board, dragging himself up by one hand, as well as he could, before the weight of the dory should bring up against his head. He made fast on a belaying-pin; then looked aft.

The skipper's body was close to the rail, and the Chinaman sprawled in the port scuppers.

"Be they hav' a fight?" Ellison started towards them. A quick, heavy puff of wind came; he ducked as the boom rushed across the deck with a rattle of cordage and blocks. When she careened the skipper rolled against the wheel-box, limp and helpless. The cook slid a few inches.

"For'ard!" the fisherman shouted, scarcely crediting that there was no one aboard. The sound of his voice came back to him hollowly in the fog and growing darkness. He stared about wonderingly. The seas were gaining in height as he watched, and the wind whined stronger each moment in the rigging. A dash of spray came full in his face, its coldness startling him.

That the hurt hand might not be bruised, he tucked it between the second and third button of his oil-skin, pushing it in to the wrist. The schooner flatted into the wind again, hesitated, shivered, her spars cracking, and came about.

"What me to do?" he gasped, his position and responsibility awing him.

The dory soused along behind, towing now on one angle, then on the other, dipping badly.

Ellison saw the little pipe then, picked it up, smelled of it—and hurled it overboard.

"Th' Chinay's pisened 'un an' hisself," he muttered. "T'ey be no good, t'em Chinay."

The wind shrieked a sturdy blast; the schooner answered it by falling off for an instant, then

running into the breeze again, pitching. He saw his chance, dashed to the main-sheet and hauled in as much as he could, taking a half-turn on the bits when the schooner fell away. He paid out the rope till he could reach the wheel, then put his foot on it and spun a few spokes with his one hand. She came up quickly; he got in several feet this time. Again he did his trick, and again, each time gaining till he had the main-sail close-hauled. Then he half-hitched the wheel, so that she could not gyrate as before, and ran forward.

"Ah-oy!"

The forecastle was dark; no sound answered him but the noise of the seas and the yelling of the wind. Night was on him, blacker because of the fog, made very cold by the wind. By dint of heart-breaking tugs that racked the muscles of his back, he close-hauled the stay-sail, too. Panting, he leaned against the rail.

"T' foag wo' no last long wi' t' wind." He crawled below and found the big horn.

Blowing a mighty "*Po-o-op!*" into the night, the sound reaching out over the waves mysteriously, he listened.

Squ-ushle—squ-a-s-st! A rain of brine, wind-driven, in his face; the *Lucky* lifted easily; he stood waiting.

"T' Cap'n must be zick bad or *zom'thin'*."

He turned quickly at "*Luck-e-e*, ahoy!" A voice from somewhere came the tones.

"*Po-o-op!*" He put all the strength of his lungs in the blast.

Spray hurtling over her in sheets, the schooner hove-to, fell off a point, hove-to again, making but slight way.

"Aho-oy!"

"*Po-o-op!*" he answered. A dory grated alongside; he watched it half-heartedly, the pain in his hand and arm dazing him.

Burberry and the Swede got to the deck, their dory banging to windward.

"W'ere's th' Cap'n?" the mate bellowed. Ellison weakly pointed aft, swaying unsteadily. Burberry saw the Chinaman by the same glance, and sized up the situation instantly. "He been smokin' th' cook's dope pipe!" His roar sounded but faintly for the noises of the freshening gale. "Why didn't ye run down to us, 'stead o'

heavin'-to? What ye and Bim been doin', anny-how?" His quick eyes saw the boom drooping.

"Come up on yer lifts!" He swayed at one, Ansen took in on the other. "Bear a hand, Jack, lively now, an' git this. Say!"—he swung on his heel, the water dripping from his mustache —"w'ere's Bim, the lazy divvil? Hev' ye both quit workin' for to-day?" His voice, such of it as could be heard, was sarcastic, when Ellison, his legs trembling under him, relaxed between the halliards to leeward. As he spoke, Burberry caught sight of the dory bobbing and lurching aft.

His anger flared. "Say, what d 'ye think this craft is, eh? Go leaven' yer dory jerken' an' strainen' her planks out thar'!" He strode across the slanting deck, reaching out to grab Ellison.

"*Well, holy lobsters!*" as the Labradorian's head fell forward, his body sagging to the deck. "Ansen!" the mate thundered. He pulled Ellison flat by his left arm. The wounded hand slipped out of the oil-skin. "The pore sucker!" Burberry muttered, seeing. "No wonder he

couldn't do anythin'; 'tis a wonder he got her hove-to at all, only him and Bim to work her! Lug him for'ard—git him in his bunk!"

He and the Swede took Ellison into the forecastle and placed him with rough care between his blankets. The smelly interior was dark.

"Bim, ye scouse, come out o'— *He ain't here!*"

The mate felt Sharkey's bunk all over, then tried the others. He sprang up the ladder, Ansen at his heels. They stared at each other.

"What's happened?"

Burberry felt that something was very wrong.

"Maybe da fool es below aft," Larz suggested. They hurried through the skipper's quarters, even hunting through the mate's cabin in the blackness. "Yesus, he's gone b' t' board!" the Swede said, with a gruff softness.

On deck again.

The night was clear, stars in sight here and there between rifts of the clouds, and once, when the great masses split widely, the moonsheen

streamed over the wild seas, its light topping the crests pure white and gleaming. The gale was freshening steadily.

"Git yer lights hung, lad; God knows where th' rest of the boys be; we'll try to run down a ways ef it don't git too dusty."

The Swede vanished towards the bows.

"Ye fool!" the mate grumbled, looking down at the skipper. "An' ye'll stay there till a bit o' wet brings ye to!" He got hold of the painter of Ellison's dory. "Pore ol' Bim!" he whispered, heaving in on it hand over hand. "Ye was always kind o' sulky, but a fust-rate doryman. Ain't it hell?" he asked himself, resting for a moment, his eyes roving into the half-light reaching away over the tumultuous seas. "Another good man gone into the jaws o' *that!*" —he spat fiercely on the heaving, curling waters —"whar' many a lad has gone afore, God bless 'em!"

He pulled away lustily at the painter. The dory's bow bumped the short overhang, scratched along, and came under him. He made fast. The moon broke through the clouds again and

shone full on the man's face on the bottom. The mate gasped.

"Bim Sharkey or yer ghost?" he yelled, starting back at the weird sight of a green-white face tossing and falling in the light of the moon. He almost crept to the rail—and believed his eyes. Watching his chance, he swung himself over.

Bim was warm, and when the mate touched him he moved.

"Leg-go, ye murderin' fool!" Sharkey breathed, but the wind drowned the words.

The mate thrust his great arms under the half-conscious man, waited till a sea lifted the dory nearly on a level with the rail, and literally threw him on the schooner's deck, clambering after.

Br-r-r-un-g—th-u-uump! A comber struck the *Lucky* fairly on her beam, its frother lashing across her decks viciously. Forward the port and starboard lights twinkled strangely into the screeching night, and far away, above, a big white gleam showed that the sailing-light was burning well. The wind flung itself mightily at the schooner's canvas, forcing her scuppers

deeply awash now and then. The Swede came aft.

"There's Bim!" the mate shrieked. "Been a row o' some kind! I—" *Sw-ss-sht—th-w-an-ng!* The *Lucky* pounded and labored, rising to the dark mountains of water, darting into the valleys between with tremors from mast-head to keel. "We'll have to run from this!" Burberry had his mouth close to the Swede's ear. The two dories thrashed and cracked alongside.

"—oy!" Like a far-away scream the voice came to them. Ansen seized the fog-horn and sent a long blast to leeward. Another dory slid out of the darkness.

McCloud and Nickerson came on board. They were exhausted, wet to the bone, hungry, and cold.

"What th'—" the Nova-Scotian began.

"Turn to an' git these dories on deck! *Move,* ye sons o' sea-cooks!" The mate tailed onto the first one.

By dint of long-drawn "yo—heave—y-o!—yo-heave—och—hair-y's!" the three were hauled to the deck and made fast. Through the long

hours of the whirling night the four men watched and waited, sometimes slacking away and running on compass course for where ten dories should be—somewhere on the driving, leaping seas.

And one by one they found them, their little drag-anchors out, the men huddled in the stern sheets almost freezing, cursing in thankfulness when they saw the schooner and the schooner saw the light they made.

Nine dories were nested and lashed down; eighteen men swore at the cook because there was no fire or food, and growled at the skipper lying under a tarpaulin for smoking dope and keeping them out on a driving sea. They damned him for having risked the schooner *first*, their lives afterwards. Somebody "goes" nearly every trip, but if the schooner "goes" all hands are crossed from the lists at home, and some cottages have great misery and loneliness on the Gloucester beach.

"One hand t' th' foret'p-m'st-head ter keep a lookout fer the French kid an' 'Slats'!"

Ansen swarmed up stiffly to the mate's order.

He reached the jerking, swinging height and curled his legs about the rigging, twining his arms securely in the ratlines. At one moment he hung over the hissing waters to port, then with a yank that strained his muscles the schooner lurched to starboard, the mast quivering, rigging trembling under him. He had one hand on the staysail-guy; it was taut as a bar of steel, the wind making it hum with a dull note, shrilling through the hooks that held the canvas. His keen, though tired eyes strained away into the interminable distances of heaving waters, dull, gray, and dirty in the daylight that came so slowly out of the east. The jerkings were more violent then.

He heard a faint shout; peering at the deck, he saw the mate beckoning to him to come down. His limbs ached when he loosened them, and he crawled below step by step.

"Got ter reef her!" Burberry shouted.

"Ready at t' wheel?"

The man nodded, bracing his feet.

"Bring her into it an' *hold* her!"

Amid the crashings of canvas, banging and

clattering of blocks, swishing of sheet-ropes, and the nasty *sissss-ss* of frothing spray, the mate's booming voice rose powerfully.

"Slack away main-s'l peak an' throat!" He leaned against the wind, watching the gaff and throat drop, the stick slashing badly.

"*That's well!*"

Six men clung to the boom, gathering in the billowing, stiff canvas. The work warmed them, loosened their cold joints; in scant minutes they had finished.

"H'ist aw-a-y!"

"Double on th' stay-s'l!"

McCloud and Nickerson crawled out on the bowsprit, clinging for their lives. The sail, though sheeted down hard, flapped in their faces with stunning force; McCloud's nose was bleeding from a whack by it.

"Hold hard, lad!" he bellowed, as the schooner rose to a terrifying height on a sea. The valley beyond seemed bottomless to the two. They gripped with all their might.

Down—down with a sickening drop the bows rushed towards the on-coming mountain of

water. It was up to their armpits, dragging at them.

They got two reefs by awful labor, breathing in panting gasps, and crawled to the deck, squatting there, exhausted.

"Cain't wait no longer!" Burberry thundered, "th' dory'll hav' to take its chance: I dassen't risk holdin' on here!"

The men looked at one another.

"They'll never live through it!" one whispered, sorrowfully. "Poor fellers!"

"An' de kid was yolly boy, too!" The Swede's eyes were moist with salt, but not the salt of the sea, as he stared over the hurtling crests. A silence among all hands, a grim, ugly silence, for well they knew what it meant to leave a dory in a gale like this. No one dared responsibility. The mate was in command, the skipper, soaked and inert yet, aft, and the cook half awash in the scuppers.

"Keep her off to port an' slack away yer stay-s'l an' main-s'l!"

Alec Douglas, at the wheel, hesitated to obey.

"Blast ye, man, do 's yer told!" Burberry growled, leaping at the other.

In his rush his foot struck the skipper hard.

The blow, on top of the wet and cold, brought Johnson to his senses. He staggered to his feet, clawing at Douglas's shoulder. The mate stepped back.

"Wha's this?" the skipper muttered, dragging himself upright; "wha's this?"

Silence among the men. The flying crest of a sea struck him viciously. He started as though hit with a lash.

"Wha's this?" His wits gathered fast; the chill invigorated him as he stood, coatless, hatless, in the full force of the gale. "I know!" His voice grew stronger. "Bad blow, eh, Burb'rry? Bad blow, eh?"

The mate nodded. Johnson realized that the schooner was running beam to the wind.

"Got yer hands all 'board, Burberry?"

The mate paused as the words were coming. Johnson saw the look on his face.

"God dang ye, *answer!*" he screamed, his mind keen now.

Still the mate was silent, the men grouped behind him, gaunt and forlorn in the full daylight.

"Line up, lads, till I see for myself!"

Weak in his body, the skipper's legs shook when the seas pounded at the schooner. He counted and called by name each man. He came to—

"Frenchy!" No answer.

"Is he for'ard?"

One head shook negatively.

"Slats!" No answer. Then he remembered that these two had started in the same dory that morning. Slowly, shade by shade, the skipper's face grew white, livid, as he understood. Then with an awful curse he let loose his anger.

"The wrath of God be on ye, ye *cowards, cowards, cowards!*" his voice rising to a shriek. "Ter go an' leave a dory—*leave a dory* in this sea! I'm sick o' ye, an' hope to hell that—It's easy 'nough when ye'r' on th' schooner to feel bad; how 'bout them two, a-hopin', a-prayin' for us to come, a-fightin' the gale all alone an' freezin', waitin' for us? How 'bout

it, ye low-lived curs? How 'bout it?—God!" his voice thrilled strangely, "an' I said I'd never leave a dory! Sam Johnson ain't never left a dory yet, an' he 'ain't agoin' ter begin now! Burberry, ye suckered fool, I thought better'n that of ye! Stand by!" he roared, fury gleaming in his eyes, strength growing in his body with the stimulus of danger. "Stand by, ye poor babies, ter come about, an' *back* fur that dory!"

Not a man moved. The mate coughed. "It's too—"

"Hard down!" Johnson ordered. Alec Douglas was undecided. The gale was very strong and the skipper not too responsible, he thought to himself.

Like a tiger Johnson flung himself at the man, hitting him an awful blow with his fist. Alec collapsed, the wheel spinning instantly. The skipper grabbed it and brought the schooner into the wind.

"Ain't there a man thet wants ter go back fur two lads that 'll be crossed out sure if th' wind gets wusser?" He leaned against the tugging

wheel, the schooner's canvas thundering and pounding.

The fishermen moved uneasily, watching Burberry; he made no sign.

"Ain't there a *man* among ye then, that 'll *hold this wheel* while I meself sheets her?" The skipper's voice was bitter with disappointment.

A figure rose behind him.

"Me holdee wheel, Capping!" Wong was ready.

"God bless ye, man! Thar!" shaking his fist at the men—"thar, keel-haul ye! Here's a poor Chinee a-showin' *white* men that they be cowards. Jest a yaller man he is, but he's got a whiter heart than the whul blamed lot o' ye! Keep her into it, Wong, till I sheets for'ard!"

"Me keepee!" the cook answered, drawing a long knife from under his shirt and putting it between his teeth—"*me keepee!*"

Johnson plunged at the group of men, striking right and left. He got to the staysail-sheet and began hauling.

"Yesus!" the Swede murmured, "I be goin' to help!"

Like sheep the others followed.

The schooner was close-hauled then, lifting, falling, singing over the seas. Hour after hour they watched, trimming the wind, the skipper himself at the wheel, while Wong got food for the men.

"Dory in sight!" McCloud yelled, dancing up and down with excitement.

"Where away?" Johnson hugged the spokes.

"To lee'ard two p'ints!"

He saw the spot then, lurching on the combers.

"Slack, ye babies—slack away!"

The *Lucky* roared towards the dory.

"I'm agoin' to jibe—*mate!*"

"Stan' by to jibe!" Burberry shouted through his hands. "Over she goes!"

A thundering crash and rattle; the schooner was headed for the dory. Johnson handled his wheel keenly.

"For'ard—have a line ready!"

Nearer and nearer to the dory. The two

men could be seen crouching aft and bailing. With a swift turn the skipper brought the schooner beside it, her sails cracking and slatting.

One man caught the line painfully and made fast. They were hauled alongside and helped to the deck. Their dory, fish and all, was got aboard, and the *Lucky* ran before the gale again. Johnson called all hands.

"Now, ye poor ITS, ye see what ye wanted to do, 'cause ye were 'fraid! Jack Ellison fo'ard, wi' only one arm, saved th' schooner yes-ter-day; me an' Wong saved you two," looking at Deranges and "Slats" Furby. "Now, then, ye suckers, remember that life's worth savin' always, an' thet Sam Johnson's agoin' ter do it every chance he gets. I'm ashamed o' ye, Gloucester men that ye profess ter be; ye'll have to work damned hard to git back yer reputation wi' me!"

Cowed and sorry, the men got forward, while the spray and salt fume lathered over the schooner's deck.

"You, *Mister* Burberry"—Johnson's voice was like acid in its tones—"keep her running

till the wind lets up, an' call me then! Sam Johnson never leaves a dory, *an' don't you forgit it!*"

"Ay, ay, Cap'n." The mate saluted, humbly.

V

THE BEST MAN OUT OF LABRADOR

WHEN Ellison moved from the mouth of the Forteau, Labrador, to Port Saunders, Newfoundland, in order to trap lobsters for the canning-factory, he aroused enmity among the lobster-fishermen there.

"What t' divvil do 'un want a-comin' to 'uns' waters?" Mat Wheeler grumbled to a group o' men that squatted on the rickety dock one Sunday afternoon.

"Might 'a' stayed to cod-haulin', 'stead o' tryin' to take 'uns' money!" another answered.

They were silent then, these great, rough men of Newfoundland, whose lives and existence depend on the whims and fancies of the ocean, whose money is made by gathering the crawling great crabs from beneath its surface. In the

warm sunlight they seemed more gaunt, more tired than ever, but their eyes were sharp and keen with that clear depth only found in eyes that have to see by night almost as well as by day, that have to look far outside and judge the weather, that have to be quick to note "signs."

Behind them the houses of the village shone in the soft lights, and the stench of decaying lobster bodies, uncovered in great red heaps by the low tide, was wafted here and there in the faint breeze. But they were used to it. To the east, straight down Ingarnachoix Bay, the waters, blue and scarcely rippling, stretched away towards the Labrador coast, one long, interminable surface, unmarred by swell, because the sullen rolls of the Strait do not run inside. Some clouds drifted over the heavens, moving with almost unnoticeable motion. Anchored abreast of the dock were a score of fishing-boats, and, rising huge among their puny forms, the hull and spars of a trading-schooner. The scene, peaceful and quiet, seemed a soothing draught to men who fight the elements year in, year out, adjusting themselves to its require-

ments, watching their chances, and taking many, always. The light-house on the point stuck up from the gray rocks like a white finger, the curtains drawn over the lenses shining by reflection.

Lobster-cars, full of the succulent fish to be boiled, stripped from their shells and packed in tins, hung low to the water, their top gratings sousing when little ripples broke against them.

On both sides of the bay the wooded shores were green with the small growth of pine and fir; the hues dwindling to a cold gray beyond, where nothing but the rock and great shingle can withstand the fury of autumnal gales and the fierce grinding of winter ice.

Wheeler got out his pipe slowly, one leg stretched out, that he might shove his big hand in his pocket for a plug of tobacco. He wrangled little hunks from it with a dull knife and crumbled them between his palms, scraped a match, and puffed stolidly. The others waited.

"Boys"—he smoked hard, the blue cloud issuing from his lips in dribbles—"let 'uns cut away his buoys!"

"'Un'll lose all t' traps?" Ezekia Nelson mumbled, suggestively.

"Ay, an' 'un 'll go back to Forteau t' codhaulin' an' leave 'uns t' our lobesters then!"

"T'ere's room fur all o' 'uns, Mat, on t' bay!"

Wheeler glowered at Nelson. "Ay, an' s'posen', t'ere be room? Ah'm no zayin' t'ere bain't, but t' man has t' luck, an' gits more lobesters than any o' we."

"Iss t'at hiss fault or ourn?" Ezekia was a fair man, and saw things only in their best light.

"Don' know whose fault, but t' bos ssayz 'un catches more lobesters 'n we, 'n sayz 'un 'll cut t' price on we ef we do na git more lobesters 'n him."

Several heads nodded solemnly.

"Mat ha' right!" Drisco announced. "Ellison 'll cut de prices on we, *zure!*"

Wheeler stood up, knocking the ashes from his pipe on a weather-worn string-piece. "Shall 'uns run 'un out?"

A long pause.

"'Un's got a woman an' b'y t' feed, Mat," Nelson said, gravely.

The other leered at him: "An' 'ain't we-'uns got women an' childer t' feed, too? Ye'r' a fool, 'Zeke, wi' a fambily o' seven, t' talk 'bout odder men's women!"

Wheeler walked to the end of the dock, the old boards creaking under his weight, and spat angrily on the still water. He watched the tiny ripples tremble away.

"No!" he shouted then, swinging on his heel. "I'll ha' no prices cut for me by Jack Ellison! We 'uns 'll cut hiss buoys wance, an' t'at 'll do it!"

The crowd shuffled their feet. They did not like this forcing a man out by the loss of his entire set of traps, hired from the factory.

One by one they gave in, then, remembering their own families—all but Nelson. He jumped up and shook his fist at Wheeler.

"I'll ha' no hand i' thiss dirty bus'ness! T' man's got all t' right we 'uns have!" He strode away up the dusty path to the village.

The men stared after him sulkily; then Mat followed, and caught up with Nelson, grabbing him by the shoulder.

"Mind me what me be sayin', 'Zekia Nelson—ef you 'un be 'fraid o' Jack Ellison, that be a'right, but do na tell 'un 'bout t' buoys, man—ye mind?"

Nelson's face changed with a suddenness that startled the other. He shook off Wheeler's hand roughly.

"You be a liar, Mat Wheeler, fur well y' know I fear'd no man, but there's some'at y' don' know, an' that's thiss"—he stuck his chin forward aggressively, his eyes shining in the sunlight—"I wass borned honest, I've so lived honest, an' I hain't 'goin' to hev' no mixin' wi' y' w'en y' go for to try ruinin' a honest man like Ellison! That's my word! As for tellin', hit ain't no fishin' o' mine; I'll do as I well—damn—please!"

Wheeler laughed sneeringly; he dared no more, because he remembered a certain fight between Nelson and a big Swede from an American schooner; he had a vivid recollection also of what the short, heavy man before him had done to the Swede on that occasion.

"Ye'll coome by a lot bein' *honest*, hein?"

Nelson's characteristic good-nature reasserted itself; he smiled. "Wall, la'ad, I hain't so tur'ble bad these forty yearn bein' honest!" and walked away.

Mat watched him turn into the trim little garden about the wee whitewashed house on the hill-side.

"We do na need y'," he growled, "an-nyway —go to blazes!"

He went back to the rest. For a long time they talked in whispers, while the sun sank, glowing and scarlet, into a brilliant west. One by one they dwindled, till but a few were left. These, too, shuffled off in the gloaming, and the old dock was deserted; still, save for the lap, lap of tiny wavelets, and the gentle sithing sound made by the lobsters in the nearest car as they crawled in and out of water over each other. The shadows were superb by East River Mountain, lengthening, ever lengthening, till their long, dark fingers crept on the water. The evening lights were of that peculiar cold-purple haze of summer in the Northland, beautiful in their gauzelike texture, filmy and waving as the

tinted clouds moved. A long streak of yellowed crimson bored its way into the night skies that rose out of the east, like a shaft of light in a mine. From across the bay came the vigorous quack of sheldrakes, the harsh noise smoothed by distance. For a few minutes the houses stood out glowing white against their dark background; then instantly they became vague blobs of gray on black as the sun disappeared in its nest of hot colors. The crimsons and scarlets changed to soft blues and violet; the bright yellow to amber and deep orange, the dainty greens of the north and south merged into blue-black; and they were all gone.

Flickering chill and far away the evening star cast its rays to earth. In groups of few, in masses, then in myriads, the suns of the night shone forth with mystic effect. From the windows of the houses yellow beams came warmly, and the noise of barking dogs, as they were fed, awoke the echoes that flung and reflung themselves from the cliffs beyond. A scene of peace and quiet.

When the moon rose in full crescent, both tips

pointed upward. Nelson, from his doorstep, turned to his wife. "'T 'll be 'un dry month, Car'y." He shut the door after him.

Higher and higher, till the houses cast no shadows, the moon climbed slowly, and everything was silent in the little village of Port Saunders, Newfoundland.

Figures stole carefully to the dock when the white crescent was on the wane.

"*Ssht*, man!" Wheeler hissed, when Drisco dropped his oar on the dory bottom, the clatter seeming like small thunder in the stillness.

Nine men got aboard their own boats anchored out, and cast off their moorings silently. Six boats vanished towards the outer bay, the faint creak of thole-pins becoming fainter till they were gone. Silence everywhere.

"'Tis agoen' to be 'un foine da-y, Kyrie." Jack Ellison pulled on his long sea-boots at the door of the shack, his temporary home on Ingarnachoix Bay.

"A', Jack, but mayb' t' wind 'll blaw?"

"'T 'll no blaw so's I can no haul de traps, Kyrie, my guess!" He laughed as he spoke, the same old Jack as of yore, huge, powerful, and gay. "I's got mor' lobesters dan anny o' t' rest, Kyrie!"

She stared across the waters, that were clearer and clearer in the growing daylight. "Me hope 'un 'll allus do, Jack!"

He kissed her, not roughly, but with the strong love of a Nobleman of the Sea.

"Tell 'un to To'mie I'll bring 'un back a bit'ty lobester to play wi'!"

She watched him clamber into his boat, hoist his single sail, and move away to the weak breeze towards the outer bay.

"'Un's de bessis man out o' Labrador!" she whispered to herself, going in again.

It was a grand day, and Ellison whistled softly to the crinkling of water at the bows.

"'Un 'll be just good o'tside ter haul de traps thiss eleven 'clock maybe. Mornin', Drisco!" as he passed the fisherman tugging with slow lifts at a line.

"Mornin'," the man answered, and looked

after Ellison curiously, then bent to his work again with a meaningless grunt.

The *Kyrie E.*—Jack named all his boats after his wife—swung cleanly on, passing the great, bowldered shores with even glide and good speed, for the breeze was freshening. Into the east bay and across it, round Big Point and out into the open Straits, Ellison held on, snuggled comfortably in the stern sheets, his feet resting on the stone ballast, arms leaning on the stout tiller.

"I do be hav' de luck, zure!" he said, aloud. "D'odders do na git lobesters like me! I do na knaw why 'tiss zo, but t' God must be a-glad wi' me!"

His ranges—the big pine by the cliff and the peak of East Mountain—were coming into line. He stood up, easing away the sheet, and shading his eyes, looking for his trap-buoys.

The glare on the twinkling waters was great; a path of molten silver and very broad. He came about, ducking under the boom as it slathered over the boat. She careened, steadied, then filled away.

"T'outside bu-ooy mus' be 'bout here?"

The pine and the peak were in line, and his Straits range was correct. He brought her into the wind, holding the boom away from him, and stared keenly over the depths that shone and rippled in the sunlight. No black speck of a trap-buoy anywhere. Nothing but the expanse of sea, unbroken and rolling with a gentle ground-swell from the north.

"Zure my eyes be bad, I guess!"

He kept away and beat up and down for hours. Not a buoy could he find.

The sun reached its height, and began to recede from the upper heavens. Still he sought, tacking back and forth, searching every acre of his lobster-grounds. His noonday meal lay untouched in the shadow of the middle thwart.

At last he knew what had been done, and sat down, his eyes aching from the strain of continual looking, his heart saddened.

"D'ey've cut my bu-ooys!" he muttered, apathetically.

The boat drifted and slatted; he, with head

between his hands, heedless in the stern. Of a sudden he jumped up.

"I do na knaw who done dis, but, by t' God, I'll settle wi' 'un!"

He took his course for home.

"'T 'll mean my work wi' t' factory!" he muttered, "I 'ain't got no money fur to buy more traps! Kyrie, *Kyrie*—" he continued, with a deep groan, "d'ey's done me, zure! But"—his voice trembled with anger—"I'll settle wi' 'em fust afore we hass to go back ter Forteau!"

He reached the little shack by the shore just as the sun was setting, crimson-glorious in the west, and the clouds a melody of harmonious colors. Kyrie was waiting for him.

"Hass 'un done well thiss day?" she called, before his boat struck the shingle.

He looked at her silently, and she saw the expression on his face.

"T'ere's some'at de matter, Jack?"

"Ay!" he sprang on the beach, "Ay—t'ere's much t' matter!"

"Whut is't, man?"

"No matter, Kyrie, no matter whut 'tiss!"

He would not sadden *her* yet. "Give 'un some-'at t' eat, girl!"

She placed boiled cod and lobster before him, and a dipper of steaming tea. He ate and drank feverishly, gulping the food.

"I be goin' 'cross ter t' Port!"

She, who knew him so well, felt the fury in his voice; was frightened by the look in his eyes.

"Whut for t'iss time o' night?"

"No matter, Kyrie—no matter!"

He drew his rough sleeve over his mouth, stalked to the boat, pushed off, and sailed towards Port Saunders. She watched him, as always, till his canvas was but a blur in the evening purple-lights.

"T'ere's bad doin's, I know!" she whispered, brokenly.

The dock at Port Saunders held the same crowd of lobstermen as the night before, all but Matt Wheeler, and when darkness fell, shrouding the distances, envaguing the forests, he, too, came down, smoking, his great paws thrust in his pockets, cap akimbo, boots rattling loudly on the timbers.

"'Twass a good job, boys!" he announced, slowly. "Sixty-wan buoys cut an' sixty-wan traps gone to hell!" He puffed and puffed; then, "That'll do fur him thiss trip, I guess!"

No one answered. The massive faces were expressionless in the gloom, appearing through it like white masks.

"Ain't ye glad we done it?—now come—an-s'er." Wheeler squatted on a string-piece.

No sound, not a word or a whisper from these simple fishermen. Those that had taken part in the cutting of Ellison's buoys were silent; the rest did not care to speak.

"Cod-hooks!" Wheeler growled, "arter my given' ye t' plan an' ye doin' of it, ye'r' ashamed ter say ye'r' glad!"

"Ay!" Nelson said, with slow precision, "Ay, an' well they mought be ashamed!"

Wheeler sprang to his feet, moved over to where Nelson was sitting. "Ye coward, y' that dassen't say ye'r' glad!"

Nelson, still sitting, looked up.

"Take it back, Matt Wheeler!"

"I no take back nuthin'!"

"I'll gi'e ye wan more chance—*take—it—back!*" Nelson stood up, pocketing his pipe as he spoke.

Murmurs came from the group.

"Take it back, Matt!" could be heard here and there.

Wheeler was stung to the quick. He, the leader always at Port Saunders, to take back his word—No!

"I do na take back what I said!"

How it was done not a man could tell. All they saw was a whirlwind of sledge-hammer blows from which Wheeler emerged, staggering, bleeding from his mouth and nose.

"'Nough, Zeke, 'nough!" some one shouted.

Nelson was thoroughly aroused. "Not till I kills him!" he snarled, striking with all his great strength. No one dared interfere, and Wheeler, groggy, weakly tried to parry the blows that showered on his head and face.

"Keep him off, fur God's sake!" he screamed.

No one moved. Nelson closed with him. A sharp wrestle, a heave, and a loud splash.

"Thar'—curse ye, that 'll do fur ye!" Pant-

ing, livid in the night light with fury, Nelson stood at the edge of the dock watching the struggles of the nearly unconscious Wheeler in the deep water below.

Drisco Beldon ran towards the dock side.

"Stan' back, Drisco! He's got it now, an' I 'low no man to undo *my* work!" Zeke's huge fists clinched with his words. His whole figure was one of enormous strength; standing there in the starlight, his massive shoulders loomed aggressively, and his breathing was plainly audible. Drisco fell back. Not a sound, save for the gurgling and feeble splashing of the man in the water, broke the deep, chill silence. Nelson watched Wheeler grow weaker and weaker.

Then, as a wraith on the tiny breeze, a sail appeared close to. No one had seen it come.

Ellison heard the drowning man, jammed his tiller over, and slid up to him.

"Keep away, thar'!" Nelson growled.

"Keep 'way, iss it?" Jack shouted back, his hand on Wheeler's coat-collar. "Thiss man's a-drownin'! Don't y' know it?" He lifted Matt aboard.

"I'm damned!" Zeke whispered.

The others crowded about as Ellison landed, the half-dead man in his arms.

"Ye be a foine lot, a-settin' thar' when thiss pore feller be a-drownin'!" he said, contemptuously.

"Ij-jiot!" Nelson breathed in his ear. "'Tiss de man, Wheeler, dat set a lot o' 'em on ter cut y' bu-ooys, an' helped do ut! He wass dead ef y' had no comed along—ij-jiot!"

The gaunt Labradorian looked down at the white, bleeding face that rested in the crook of his arm.

"So *he* be 'un, hein? I knawed I'd find 'un!"

The group waited, not knowing what to expect. Nelson, still shaking and trembling from the exertion of the fight, stood at Ellison's side.

From out of the horizon the full glory of the moon burst on the strange scene. Its first beams, reaching over the forests, lighted strongly on the Labradorian's face. He threw up his head suddenly.

"He did no try fer to kill me, boys. I'll settle wi' 'un fur t' traps later!"

A murmur of incredulous surprise came from hoarse throats as Ellison moved up the hill towards the village, carrying Wheeler. He took him to his house and laid him on the step.

"Tak' care o' 'un, missus!" he said to the woman that answered his thundering knock; "'un be near drowned!"

He went to the factory. The "boss," Armstrong, was at his desk.

"Hello, Jack; what's your load to-day? Good as ever, I suppose?"

"Naw, Mister Armstrong, I's lost all my traps!" He twirled his cap awkwardly, tumultuous thoughts racing through his brain.

"Lost your traps, man? How? There's been no storm!" Armstrong leaned back in his chair.

"Dey's—dey's—" The huge fisherman hesitated and stuttered, "I's lost 'un all, da's all!"

The boss looked at him keenly for a moment.

"Another trick to get more traps without paying!" he muttered to himself. Then, aloud, "That *is* too bad, Ellison. I'm afraid I can't let you have any more."

Jack staggered. "No more trap, Mister Armstrong? I'm finushed ef y' do na trust me."

"Sorry, Jack—can't do it—good-night!"

"'Night, zor."

Somehow he found his way out of the lobster-reeking cannery into the pure night air, and walked, unseeing, unheedingly, towards the dock. A hand grasped his arm. He stopped.

"I's wass listenin', Jack; whut do it mean ter ye?"

Nelson's burly form seemed slight in the moonlight beside that of the giant Labradorian.

Ellison looked at him with such a world of sadness that tears came to the Newfoundlander's eyes.

"It means p'utty near starvation t'iss winter, Zeke—da's all!"

"'T'll no mean it, man, fur I axes y' now to trap along o' me, an' 'uns 'll go halfs!"

Ellison whirled round. "Ye'r' a good man, Zeke, but I can no take de bread an' money f'om ye dat-a-way!"

"I's got money in de bank ter St. John's, man! I's al—l—right; do's I tells y'!" The sincere

eagerness in Nelson's voice thrilled Ellison through and through.

"An' ye w'ld 'a' let 'un drowned, Zeke?"

"Ay," the Newfoundlander growled, "an' glad o't!"

"Fur my sake?"

Nelson saw his chance to equivocate without lying, and took it instantly.

"Naw, man, naw! 'Un called me fust a loiar, then a cow-ard; da's why!"

Ellison drew a long breath. "I's knawed long since y' were friend to me, Zeke, but I could no be wi' y' ef ye tried t' kill fur *me!*"

"Wull ye go halfs?"

The Labradorian's eyes swept the dim far-away till they rested on a tiny light across the bay.

"Kyrie, *Kyrie* an' To'mie!" he muttered.

"Ay, Kyrie an' To'mie!" Nelson urged. "Will 'un?"

"Yiss, Zeke, an' t' God 'll bless 'un fur t'iss!"

"An' ye'll sattle wi' Wheeler?"

Jack drew himself up, his muscles working under his rough clothes. "I'll sattle wi' 'un fur

t' traps, but I'll no *kill* 'un!" he answered, very softly.

"Da's right, Jack, ye be right! An' me 'll help y' sattle!"

They went to the dock together.

For two weeks Ellison threw in his lot with Zeke, working hard. The days were longer at the traps, and because of summer calms many miles had to be rowed back and forth. When he came to the shack, sometimes very late, he would throw himself on the bunk, too tired to eat, but never too tired to kiss Kyrie and to have a minute's play with the boy.

"Aw girl," he sighed one night, sitting on the door-sill, the cool night air moving caressingly over his hot forehead, "I be zure done, an' on'y four dollars thiss two week! I do na know w'ere 'tiss goin' end! Them divvils!" He dashed to his feet. "T' G—"

"*Sst*, man, no t' say it!" She had her hand over his mouth. "We 'uns've lived happy an'

well manny bit'ty year, an' 'tall coome right; no t' currse, man!"

He pulled her hand away gently, looking at her from his great height, and a smile flitted over his face as he bent towards her.

"Y' be zure right, Kyrie, an' I'm sorry I thought o't!"

It was no effort for him to lift her in his arms.

"I be on'y sad, Kyrie, 'cause ye an' t' boy 've no much t' eat, or clo'es." He swallowed hard. She felt the quiver of his body.

"Da's a' fine, Jack; don't y' worrit. 'Tiss summer yit a time, an' y'll h've more better luck soon."

He stood silent in the starlight, watching the slowly darting reflections of the night-lights on the waters of the bay.

"I be goin' sleep." He pulled off his boots and curled up on the far side of the rough bed.

The woman looked out beyond, where the lights of Port Saunders blinked drowsily.

"Ye've tried fer to drive 'un out, an' would 'a' but fer Zeke, bless 'un; an' my Jack 'll show y' yit!"

There was a fierce, subdued anger in her low words; the emotion of a woman who knows that the man she loves has been unfairly treated. She shivered.

"'Tiss goin' t' blaw by mornin'!" peering across the twinkling heavens.

She went in, shutting the rickety door securely.

"Up, girl, an' breakfus'!" Ellison touched her.

"Wh't—wh'-t?" Heavy with sleep, she stared at him, standing over her in his oil-skins, sou'-wester in hand.

"Dad?"

"A'—To'mie?"

"Be 'un goin' out thiss day?"

He laughed for an instant, then was silent. The woman roused herself, listening.

The wind hurled viciously at the shack, pulling in gusts at the door, sobbing under the thin eaves. She jumped up and ran to the little window. The bay was only ruffled by the powerful wind, but in the Straits great sheets of spray lathered into the air and were driven away instantly.

"Y' be no goin', Jack?"

"Ay, Kyrie; I told 'un Zeke I'd go-a thiss day. T' rest 'll no dare go; mabbe I'll make some'at better prices!"

"Do na go, Jack, do na, fur *my* sake—an' To'mie!"

"Naw, naw, Kyrie, do na take on thiss a-way; 'tiss a'right! Manny a time I be out i' wuss nor thiss, an' ye knaw it!" He picked the lad, in his coarse, woollen night-shirt, up in his great arms. "Zure, To'mie, y' be no afeard?"

The boy looked into his father's eyes with absolute confidence. "Naw, dad, ef y' t'ink bestis!"

He sat him in his long crib again.

"Thar, Kyrie—be no afeard! T' bo-oy knaws."

She said no more, placing cold fish and tea before him. He ate heartily.

"'By, Kyrie! 'Tiss day I make de money—ZURE!"

To'mie the boy, clinging to her skirt, she saw Ellison double-reef his sail, shove off, and bear away towards the Straits, waving his hand to her.

"T' God be wi' 'un!" she prayed, softly.

Overhead a whirling, racing mass of wind-cloud and feathery drift dashed on to a nor'-nor'east wind that stung on the Labradorian's face and drove spray sharply over his boat as he held on outside. The shores of the bay seemed a duller gray and more bleak than ever; forbidding in their harshness when mists upon mists of spume flew over them. As a distant, furious roar the sound of the breakers on Long Point came to Ellison. He shifted his course a point.

"'Tiss 'un bad 'un, no misstake! T'ere 'll be no 'un out t'iss day but me!"

Ahead of him, rearing their crests to enormous heights, the combers of the Straits raced by, dirty green and frothing in the pale daylight.

Ellison hove-to under the Point and stood up, water dripping from his sleeves and hat. Long and keenly his eyes swept the tumbling stretches of seas, and he reckoned his chances.

"'F 'twere no for Kyrie an' t' bo-oy, I'd no go," he muttered, "but t'ey need 'un money, an'

ef I kin find dem traps—da's good t'iss day to de factory!"

He examined his halliards and sheet, noting also that the rudder was securely stepped, and steered out into the full strength of the wind. The boat scurried ahead, water just reaching the thole-pins to leeward, blowing back sharply. For a time he was in calm surface, then, as he flew along past the Point, the heave of the long surges reached him, tossing the boat up and down with squirts of spray.

"Can no git to de outsiders!" he said, aloud. "'Ll have fer to haul by d' east rocks!"

Tumultuous and wild, the huge seas, but a little way beyond him, rose and hurried on, their sides white with sickly foam. He could faintly hear their hiss and curl as they broke over each other in the mad rush on the outside bar. Full daylight was on, but the salt haze and shifting veils of wave mist prevented his seeing far. He shivered with cold as a stinging crest dashed over him.

"'Tiss ba-ad!" wiping the water from his eyes.

Swsshle—swsshle—swis-s-s-s—t was the sound

of the waves, to a weird crying and whistling of the wind in his rigging.

He worked ahead carefully, keeping her away, and luffing as the gusts came more and more viciously. His hands were purple with chill and strain, but he dared not let go of either the tiller or sheet, and he sat tight, grimly holding on, spume and liquid dust flying over him.

"T'ere's a bo-at!" he shouted loudly then, seeing a bit of sail outside of him laboring badly in the seas. He got to his knees and watched it keenly each time he rose on the heights. Sometimes it, too, was on top of a sea, and he could distinguish a lobster-boat, heavy-loaded with traps, struggling for the inner bay.

"'T'll niver live onless 'un t'rows de traps away!" he muttered, heading more into the wind to slow his speed.

"'Tiss gon-ed!" he yelled, as a monster curling sea rushed on the other.

"No-a!" as he saw it slowly climb the next oncoming wave. He watched it several minutes.

"T' fool! I be goin' see whut ails 'un!" He brought the *Kyrie E.* into the wind, waited his

chance, and came about, throwing himself to leeward as she took in the green badly. He beat his way to within a hundred yards of the other, then looked sharply.

"'Tiss Matt!" he said, gave a glance at the lone man who bailed with one hand, trying to steer with the other, and kept the *Kyrie E.* away.

"'Un's got it now!" he whispered, "an' t' be on'y fair!"

Some impulse of a powerful nature made him turn his head.

Wheeler, desperate, had hove his boat into the wind, and was standing up, waving a handkerchief. Ellison chuckled grimly.

"Ye've tried fer to sta-arve me an' Kyrie an' To'mie out! No-ow take it!" He kept his boat to her course.

Suddenly his wife's face came before him, and he saw the look in her eyes at his leaving a man to such a death. He looked back again. Wheeler was bailing, the stern of his boat so heavy with lobster-traps that the seas broke in over it every instant.

"T' fool, w'y do na he t'row 'un out?"

A fight to the end went on in the Labradorian's mind. On one hand the great wrong the man had done him, on the other, his life, for well Jack knew he could save him. Against this sympathetic sensation Ellison put the fact that Kyrie and the boy had had no clothes for a month, and very little to eat; his heart bittered at the thought, and he kept on. Then the vision of Wheeler's family, destitute, with no one's hand to help them, a wife and five children (and a woman's chance in Newfoundland is a very slight one), rose up. He jammed his tiller over.

"I'll do my best—God!" he murmured, apologetically, ashamed of his first desire. Carefully, with steady nerves, watching the combers as they hurled themselves by him, he drew alongside the other. Matt's boat was over half full, and soggering heavily in the seas.

"T'row out de traps!" Jack shrieked, standing to his tiller.

"Can't do it! Tied fasst, an' I dassunt leg-go t' untie!" Wheeler screamed back.

"Stan' by!" the Labradorian bellowed, seeing an awful breaker, its top beginning to furl, rushing down on them.

Wheeler lost his head. He kept away instead of holding his bows into it, and the thing was done. Ellison took in some water, not much, and when the *Kyrie E.* slid into the long valley after the big wave, all he saw was Wheeler's upturned boat and the man swimming towards him. Jack got him aboard with a deft heave and a lurch.

"Da's twict ye 'ain't killed me w'en y' had t' chanct!" Matt sobbed.

Ellison looked at him contemptuously, guiding his boat the while with innate skill.

"Pore fool ye!" he thundered. "God 'ain't made me t' kill t' likes o' ye!"

Wheeler stared at him.

The wind yelled and droned about them, and the seas snarled hungrily. In a few moments Port Saunders came into sight, and within an hour the *Kyrie E.* glided into the smooth waters of the bay. Ellison sat down in the stern-sheets, moodily silent, Matt watching him furtively.

"Are ye glad or sorry 'un saved me?" he asked.

"I do na know," the Labradorian answered, gruffly.

The Newfoundlander was silent. They slid up to the dock at the port. Nelson and several others were clustered there.

"Do na that beat all?" Zeke mumbled, seeing Wheeler in Ellison's boat.

Questions by the score poured on the two when they landed.

"Whut is't, Jack, lad?" Nelson whispered. Ellison drew away from him roughly.

"'Tiss now't, Zeke. I be zorry, but I did no haul t' traps t'iss day."

Nelson clung to his arm. "How be Matt Wheeler along o' ye?"

The Labradorian straightened in his wet clothes, shivering with cold. "'Tiss *now't*, I tell 'un, Zeke!"

"Ay, it *be* some'at, boys!"

The group turned as one man when Wheeler spoke. His face was gray-drawn and haggard.

"'Tiss Ellison ha' sav-ved me t'iss day, an' "—he swallowed several times—"I war a-stealin' hiss traps an you'n, Zeke, w'en he did it, da's all!"

Nelson sprang viciously at him, but a long, burly arm thrust him back. Ellison towered between the two, grimly smiling. "T' traps be gone, annyway, Zeke; 'tain't no use growlin' now!"

"Coome wid me!" Wheeler grabbed Ellison by the arm, and led him to the boss's desk in the factory.

"Mister Armstrong!"

"Well, Matt?" the superintendent asked, flicking the ashes of his cigar to the floor.

"I done cut dis man, Ellison's, bu-oys t'ree week ago; me an'—"

"*Ssht!*" Jack gripped the Newfoundlander hard; "tell on yersel' ef ye like, but do na giv' t' odders' names, seein' ye coaxed 'm t' do it!"

"I's got two hund'er dollar t' my credit?" Wheeler leaned forward impetuously.

"Yes, Matt, you have."

"I wants Jack ter be fitted out wi' a new set o' traps, an' I'll pay!"

Ellison and Nelson stared in surprise. Wheeler was breathing hard in his excitement.

Armstrong pushed back his chair and stood up slowly.

"You are a dirty scoundrel and a thief, Matt Wheeler! Here I've been almost starving this man because of your tricks. I'll not take your 'pay,' as you call it. You *have* two hundred dollars to your credit, yes, but not one more lobster does this factory buy of you! And I'll fit out Ellison at our expense. He's a better man than ever came into Port Saunders, and I'm proud to have him trap for us. My apologies, Jack?"

Ellison shuffled awkwardly again.

"'T'ass a'right, Mister Armstrong, but"— he *was* sorry for the poor devil beside him, for he knew what the factory's boycott meant—"wull ye not let Wheeler go on?"

"No," Armstrong shouted, "not for any amount of lobsters!"

The Labradorian, his old grudges forgotten,

thrust his face close to that of the superintendent. "Ye'll let Wheeler go on, else me an' Zeke—eh, Zeke?"—turning to the burly man, who nodded—"else me an' Zeke an' Wheeler 'll sell to Bonne Bay!"[1]

Silence in the dingy office, more dingy and dark than ever in the dull storm-light. The wind yowled lustily down the little chimney, creating a vicious draught on the wood embers. Armstrong felt the power of Ellison's words.

"Go on, all of you, then!" he growled.

The three stalked out. Wheeler seized the Labradorian's hand.

"Y've been too squar'!" he muttered, "an' I'll gi'e ye quarters my haulin's a week fer two mont's to pay ye."

"Go on; go on home," Ellison answered, shortly.

"Ye be a foine man, Jack!" Nelson breathed.

"Aw, Zeke, dere's odder things in life but chokin' a man out!"

The Labradorian hoisted his sail and fled

[1] The "opposition" factory.

across the bay towards the little shack, the group watching him all the way.

"Foine man!" Drisco said, quietly.

"T' bessis dat iver coome out o' Labrador," and Nelson swung up the hill.

VI

UNCLE SAM SIMMONS

THERE were a dozen or more schooners anchored in the little, bowl-shaped harbor of Château Bay, Labrador. They varied in size from the one-hundred-and-fifty-ton Gloucester "Bankers," to the little "Jacks" from Newfoundland—tiny things in comparison to the towering spars and solid top-sides of the *Lucky*, the *Colonial*, and a big, dirty Frenchman from St. Pierre, the *St. Cyr*.

Skipper Johnson and Burberry the mate watched the evening lights of the skies shift and change—now great masses of color, then shreds of torn hues, as the northwest wind drove the clouds on.

"Things are lookin' up, mate, eh?" Johnson chuckled, but the sound was not the familiar,

hearty one. The skipper had a bad cold on his lungs, and wheezed at each breath. Burberry looked at him anxiously.

"Ay, Cap'n, *fish* is good. I don't like the noise in your chest, sir, not a bit!"

"'Tis naught, man; 't'll pass over in a day or two, and—" A spasm of coughing interrupted him. "Thar, consarn it, that fit oughter last me for ten minutes, annyhow!"

"Here comes the Frenchman," Burberry whispered, as a dory pulled towards them from the *St. Cyr.*"

"Send him down, mate; I'll drop below an' get a bottle out!"

"Ay, ay."

Burberry leaned thoughtfully against the rail, his arms resting on the great coils of the riding-cable, watching the sunset-lighted flashes of the oncoming oars.

"Don't like them damned frog-eaters," he grumbled; "allus tryin' to better 'emselves by eenformation or sich. Uncle Sam!" he called, to the solitary figure by the windlass.

"Ay?"

"Stan' by ter catch his painter."

"Ees your Capitaine a-a-aboard?" the little man in the stern of the dory asked, as he clambered the chain-plates onto the deck.

"Ay, sir; step below."

The French skipper vanished under the companion.

"How's fish?" Uncle Sam inquired, solemnly, of the two swarthy men.

"La morue, she's veree goo-od; le cap'lan veree ba-ad."

"I s'pose, sir"—Uncle Sam turned to the mate—"he's a-meanin' caplin, sir—caplin, an' codfish; yes, sir, I think so."

Having delivered his opinion, the long, lean doryman moved to the windlass again, smoking, as usual.

"Take 'em into the fo'c'sle for a mug-up." Burberry went into the cabin.

Square and plain, clean and neat, with good head-room, the *Lucky's* cabin showed in the glare of a swinging-lamp, whose rays dimly penetrated the dark recesses of the four bunks. The square stove was shining with blacking;

not a cinder or ash speckled the even, oil-cloth floor. Sea-boots, oil-clothes, sou'westers, were hung neatly at the head of each man's bunk, and pictures from illustrated magazines were tacked here and there, fan-wise, on the walls.

"Sit down, Mr. Burberry — Captain Bourgeot."

They shook hands gravely, as though the operation was one of deep import and not to be treated carelessly. The comparison between the two was strange—seekers of fortune from the sea, but so different.

The mate towered a good head over the Frenchman, and his shoulders seemed again as broad. Burberry's face was quiet, while Bourgeot's was a-gleam with changing expressions—now vivacious, now sombre, now laughing, then grave, as he chattered on.

"Ah, Monsieur le Capitaine, you 'ave vone fine sheep—*veree* fine!"

Johnson smiled proudly. "Ay, she's a sweet thing, Mister Burg'ot."

"An' you, meester mate, you 'ave bin long taime on haire?"

"Since she was slid off'n th' ways."

"You see, een St. Pierre we 'ave no' de monnaie dat you Americans 'ave; we mus' tak' w'at we can prendre—get, you say—an' so"—the little skipper shrugged his shoulders slightly—"we 'ave de dirtee vaisseau, an oglee—hein?"

Burberry rubbed the palms of his great hands together in embarrassment, because he didn't know how to lie.

"Ay, sir; that's so."

Bourgeot jumped up, clapped him on the shoulder. "Voila, mon brave—da's de way to speech; an' so I tell to you dat de *St. Cyr* she can beat de *Luckee* wit' sail veree bad!"

Skipper Johnson looked up, laughed, then broke out coughing. The mate roared outright.

"Beat the *Lucky?* Why, bless yer timbers, she'll stow her top-sails, single-reef her main-sail, and show ye the cleanest heels *you* ever saw!"

"You wan' bet?"

The mate and skipper looked at each other quickly. One nodded.

"Sure!" they answered together. "How much, and to where?"

Bourgeot sipped his whiskey slowly before he answered.

"S'posen' I go 'shore, make telegramme to my ownaire at St. Pierre, h'ask if I can go Bost-one, sell feesh d'ere, par-ce-gree I'm nearlee, how you say, full-oop; s'posen' I get answeraire yes—you race me Bost-one—yes?"

Johnson's great eyebrows drew together in a heavy frown.

"For how much?"

"Say t'ousand dollaire, mabbe fift'en hondaire?"

The amount staggered the skipper. "God, man, that's damn near the worth of a trip!"

"Ah"—the Frenchman's eyes twinkled—"eef you h'afraid—den, da's all." He sipped his glass again.

Johnson leaped to his feet and brought his fist down with crashing power on the table, so that it rose from the floor.

"No, by the spars above me, no man yet said I was afraid and saw the day he won at it!" He leaned forward, his long body trembling.

With excitement his cheeks flushed beneath

the tan, his words were sharp and brittle. The mate stood up also.

"Look a-here, Mister Burg'ot, I don't know yer game, but if it's fair sailin' an th' open sea, we'll go yer!"

"Bravo, bravo!" and the Frenchman shook hands with great gusto. "An' s'posen' I telegramme by de Marconi now, an' get answeraire? W'en you readee starrt?"

The skipper thought for a moment. "How much we got now?"

"A thousand quintal." Burberry took a great chew from his black plug.

"We can hold an odd quintal or *two* more, I guess, can't we mate?"

"I rayther think so!" Burberry snortled, half ashamed to laugh.

"Let's say a week from now, to start from here; that'll be July 21st. What's the course to be?"

"Anny'ting you laik, Capitaine, h'inside h'or dehors—outside."

"And we're to give you top-sails and a single on the main?"

Bourgeot spread his hands out from his elbows depreciatingly.

"Non, non—da's onlee for w'at you call—joke—you sail, I sail—da's all!"

"How much have you got under your hatches now?"

The Frenchman hesitated, a droop to his eyelids.

"'Bout twelf hundaire quintel. You can see we deep in wataire."

"So I was noticin'—so I was noticin'," the mate said.

"I'll bet you your fish against mine, up to your load—if you ain't afeard?"

A curious look flashed over the Frenchman's face; he was silent, both the others watching him.

"Veree good," he said, then, letting the words fall crisply; "veree good."

"Say one thousand dollars, then?"

"Yes—si—certainement."

"I haven't got the cash aboard, Bourgeot, but Sam Johnson's word is as good as his gold."

"Si—si—oh yes, Capitaine; I hear of you

manee manee taimes; da's a' right. An' here" —he drew out a heavy wad of money—"here's w'at I bet."

By fifty and hundred dollar bills he counted out a thousand dollars on the table.

"Who's going to hold this yere cash?" The mate looked at it in awe. "I ain't!" he added.

"Nor me, neither!" the skipper put in, quickly.

"Somebode mus' tak' eet, naturellement!" The little chap laughed till his mustache turned towards his eyes. "'Ave you vone man you can—how you say?—have confience—trust?"

"Uncle Sam Simmons!" the mate and Johnson said together.

"Pass the word for him!" Johnson ordered. The mate stuck his head over-deck.

"Uncle Sam!"

"Hillo?"

"Come aft a minute!"

The thin, straight figure shuffled aft, boots rattling hollowly on the deck in the starlight stillness. Cap in hand, long, tawny gray hair falling over his forehead, night dampness shin-

ing on his oil-jacket, the seaman descended. Standing before the three, he indeed looked like a creature of the sea. The sharp blue eyes peered from beneath shaggy brows, squinting in the bright light.

"Uncle Sam, take a drop, an' set down."

"Thank'y, sir," as the skipper pushed the bottle to him.

"Uncle Sam," Johnson began, "I wants you to hold some money for me—a matter of a thousand dollars."

The old fellow looked up quickly. "Me, sir?"

"Ay."

"An' whut fur, kin I ast?"

"A bet, Uncle Sam, with this here Captain Bourgeot, off'n the Frenchman."

The cabin was still save for the tap-tap of the seaman's boot on the floor and a brushing sound as the French skipper passed his long fingers over his mustache.

"Well, sir, you know, it's like this—like this, sir—"

Uncle Sam lifted one leg over the other

carefully and looked for a place to spit. The mate pointed to the wood-box.

"It's—you know—more money 'n I ever saw, sir, and, y' see, I—you know—I don't know what I'd do with it—naw, sir, you know, I don't!" He shook his head slowly.

"All I want you to do is to take care of it till me or the skip' here asks for it—that's all."

Silence again.

Then for a minute the air was full of wailings—the chorus of the "huskies" ashore, as they howled mournfully.

"W'at you say, hein?" Bourgeot was impatient.

"I don't knaw." Uncle Sam's head was between his palms. "I—you see—well, I don't knaw if my timbers be sound enough fer to stan' the care o't. I be getten' old, you know—kinder sha-aky in m' gear, sir."

They all laughed; the skipper coughed harder than ever.

"Yer top-hamper's all right, tho', Unc' Sam!" and the mate chuckled.

"Oh yes, sir." The grizzled face lighted up

instantly, then darkened. "But I 'ain't got no l'arnin', you know—no l'arnin', sir—never had none, sir—only fishin', sir—fishin'—dat's all."

"You'll do, Uncle Sam," Johnson said, kindly, "incause you're hones' as the day is long, an' that's what I'm lookin' fur—not learnin'."

Simmons's face glowed with pleasure. "I've a-tried ter be, sir, all my life; yes, sir—you know—I've been married thirty-five years, an' I never lied to my wife nor struck her; no, sir—you know!"

"Here 'tis, then."

Johnson counted the money out bill by bill into the rough, gnarled palms. The fisherman stared at it, silent.

"Pile o' money, sir—yes, sir—you know—pile o' money! A thousand dollars," he whispered, barely audibly. Then gazing off through space at the companion: "My boy, sir, my eldest, he saved up four hundred and ninety-seven dollars an' fifty cents, an' he bought half share in the *Fault*—yes, sir, you know—in the *Fault*. I didn't never serpose a thousan' dollars was sich a lot o' money; no, sir, I didn't, you know—never havin'

seen of it in a lump, like this, at one haul, so to speak."

"The bet is that we beat the *St. Cyr* into Bosting from here."

"Straight sailin', sir?"

"Anny ol' way, s'long as we get there, or he"—Johnson nodded towards Bourgeot—"does."

Uncle Sam laughed, one of those peculiar, silent laughs, but hearty nevertheless.

"'Xcuse me, sir, but—you know—I guess I'll pay th' money over to *ye now!*"

The Frenchman smiled. "Bon homme, dat feller—veree!"

A drink all round then, and they went on deck.

Everywhere the northern lights flared and seethed, died down to pale sheets like the Milky Way, then blazoning out in long shafts that rushed across the heavens, from zenith to horizon, with a greenish-blue glare whose light cast a faint shadow of rigging and spars on deck. The ragged, massive cliffs rose tier on tier, ledge on ledge, one black line, till against the sky their peaks were silhouetted like graven fingers, all bent and fantastic.

"Eet veree fine, dose aurore—hein?"

Bourgeot's French eyes revelled in the artistic blacks, grays, deep purple blues of the mountains.

"Ay, 'tis fine," Johnson murmured.

Just then a star shot from the upper heavens, trailed a fiery course through the northern lights, disappeared in their blaze, came into sight below, then vanished beyond a mountain at the head of the bay.

"Did ye wish, skipper?" the mate asked of the Frenchman.

"Deed I w'at?"

"Wish?"

"W'at dat—weesh?"

"Why, when ye see a shootin'-star, ye must wish, an' ef ye don't tell nobody 't'll come true."

"Ees dat possible? Vell, vell; dat too bad. I mus' look for see 'noddaine wan!"

"*I* wished, all right—all right!" the mate murmured. "An' I wished"—he turned away that no one might hear him—"that th' skipper 'll win!"

"Ha! Dere goes, dere—la bas queeck, see heem? Voila—I weesh dat taime, certaine-

ment!" Bourgeot, so pleased that he had succeeded, danced with glee. "I weesh, by gar, I ween de t'ousand dollaires!"

"Thar', ye've done it!" Burberry growled. "That there wish ain't no good—ye *told* it! Ye've got to wish over ag'in!"

Bourgeot was disappointed, like a child that has lost a new toy. The sea makes great, simple children of men—children that have the courage and strength of long experience and hard work, children that love to be told stories, adventures of the world beyond, but children that risk their lives where "men" of education and civilization fear to tread.

"There'll be more, Cap'n; jes' watch."

Long they stared into the vastness of the overhead, while the aurora dimmed under the light of the rising moon. But, strangely enough, no star shot from its place, nothing disturbed the twinkling evenness of the firmament. The waters were calm in the bay, mirroring the three-quarters moon faithfully, and moving but very slowly to the long, slow heave and fall of the ground-swell outside.

"Bah!" little Bourgeot sniffed, "I mus' go 'ome, mon Capitaine. Manee merci for de 'ospitalité you 'ave gaf me. I meet you 'ere een wan week—hein?"

"That's the game, skipper. Good-night to ye. Won't ye taste a drap afore ye go?"

"T'ank mooch—non. I mus' go see 'bout telegramme, et cetera—bon soir!" He turned on the deck. "Holla, mes gars, venez donc, j'attends!"

"Ici, Cap'taine, ici!" His crew tumbled sleepily out of the forecastle hatch.

When the noise of their boarding their own schooner had died away, the skipper looked at the mate, the mate looked at the skipper.

"A thousan's a pile, Burberry!"

"The *Lucky* can do it, sir, sure!" The mate a-hemmed embarrassedly.

"Well, Burberry?"

"What's his game, sir, d'ye think?"

"Game? No game, 'cept that he thinks that damned craft o' his, loaded pretty clost to her flood-gates, is faster'n the *Lucky*. I'll show him; by the sea-gods, I'll *show* him!"

Burberry closed one eye solemnly and held it so while Johnson hurried on in an undertone. "We've got near enough fish for a trip, an' that *with* the thousand dollars 'll clear us *fine*. *Ef* we lose—mind ye, I say *ef*—then"—the skipper's eyes were moist for an instant—"then the missus 'll have to take a double-reef in her housekeepin', that's all."

"Beg pardon, sir—" The two swung as Uncle Sam edged closer. "But—you know—I'm jiggered 'f I likes this 'ere bet, sir—no, sir, I'm jiggered 'f I do!" He cleared his throat of tobacco-juice. "Ye see, sir, et don't stan' ter reason—you know—it don't stan' right that he'd give up his trip when he kin' hold more fish, ter race to Bosting, when his port, ye see—his *port*—es St. Pere—do it?"

"Well?" Johnson asked, gruffly.

"I thinks, sir, that—you know—he's a-comin' some game 'r another agin' us, I do, an' I thinks as how it be good thing ter go aboard him!"

"Can't we see what he's like, Uncle Sam, at a hundred yards? A dirty, heavy-laden Frenchman, with main-riggin' half gone for lack o' tar,

and topmasts ready to go by th' board at the fust good sea—let alone his stays for'ard. I'll bet *they* won't stan' two hours o' a heavy head-sea an' tide lop."

"No more they won't, sir; an'—you know—don't it seem kind of cur'ous, his bet?"

"Mebbay it do, an', ag'in, mebbay it don't, Uncle Sam. Don't you wurrit yerself 'bout it. We've took his money, an' we must do the best we kin!

"Ay," Johnson added, "the best we kin! Call all hands at th' next watch; I'll have a word with 'em aft. Good-night, Uncle Sam."

"Goo'-night, sir," the long figure answered, slowly, and turned for'ard again.

"Can you make her out anywhere, mate?" Johnson bellowed into the raging darkness for'ard.

"Seen her off'n port bow a minute since!" The voice was as a faint roar, audible above the shrieking wind sounds.

"Port bow? Damn strange!" the skipper whispered. He stepped to the binnacle. "God, he's agoin' ter shave Flower's Ledges pretty clost fer a night like this!"

The *Lucky*, under double-reefed main-sail and jib, rocketed through the enormous seas at twelve-knot speed, tossing the spume high, where it was whisked away instantly, vanishing in the night like white shrouds. Overhead long, black masses of cloud moved swiftly, now in bank formation, then in pennons and giant beams that tore viciously along.

"Keep her off a point!"

"Off a p'int," the man at the wheel echoed.

Burberry felt his way aft.

"Hell of a night, sir—eh?" shaking the brine from his beard and eyes and wringing out his huge mitts.

"Wuss'n that, Burberry. Don't know when I've seen it like this in the Straits. We'd 'a' done better outside, after all, I guess."

"There's Flower's Light, sir!" Uncle Sam sang out.

To port, far away, the welcome twinkle came

to them. They could only see it when on the top of a sea.

"Keep her off a shade more!"

"Shade more off!"

To steady himself on the pounding, laboring deck, the skipper moved over to the main-sheet; they were like bars of iron under his hand. He looked over the stern, and, accustomed as he was to heavy weather, shrank involuntarily as the awful seas reached on, one after the other, seeming as devils that, snarling, tried to get aboard. Just visible in the gloom overhead the topmasts swayed and bent, describing long arcs and deep plunges at every lurch.

Everything was dark on the *Lucky*, save for the feeble glare of the binnacle lamps and the green and red reflections on the side-light boards in the fore-rigging.

"Can you make out the danged Frenchman yet?"

The mate peered long out over the wild wastes.

"I can't! Kin you, Uncle Sam?"

The old fellow knotted his oil-skin trousers a

bit tighter, pulled his sou'wester hard down over his eyes, and slowly swarmed up the ratlines in the main-rigging. Up and up he went, till his body was but a black spot against the darkness.

Somehow a vague uneasiness was on the skipper's mind. Between coughs he swore to himself that the "frog-eater was a damned fool!" The mate, too, waited eagerly for word from aloft; even the man at the wheel leaned forward to catch it.

Silence then, of human sound, while the northeast storm bustled and screamed in spasms. The droning bass of twanging steel, the stout baritone of good manila vibrating rapidly, and the tenor voices of light gear trembling aloft, all combined in a chorus of defiance to wind and sea.

"Thar she is, abaft the beam—fair—for—th' —light!"

"What?" Johnson yelled, leaping to the binnacle. "My God, she's—"

"She's struck, sir!"

The stillness of death came on the *Lucky*. In that short instant the word had passed for'ard,

and the watch below poured out silently, hauling on boots and oil-clothes with feverish haste.

"Great God above—are ye *sure?*" the mate roared.

"Ay, sir." Faintly Uncle Sam's voice came down. "She's on th' ledges sure 'nough, an'—you know—God help 'un a night like this!"

"Thar goes her signal!"

The man at the wheel held his course steadfastly, having no orders to change, as he spoke, though well he knew what it meant to strike on Flower's Ledge in a "livin' gale."

The lurid red glare of a Coston light shone over the tumbling, racing seas, each crest fiery by reflection. In the blaze the spars of the *St. Cyr* stood out, and by it Johnson could see the combers rolling over the Frenchman. Remembering the *Susan J.*, he could feel the grinding of her timbers on the rocks.

"She's a goner this time!" Burberry yelled. "Nothin' kin save her! We'd best hold off a trifle an' make Port Saunders by mornin'."

"You be damned!" Johnson coughed and screamed. "S'pose I'm agoin' ter let men die

if I can help 'em? Stan' by, all hands, to come about—*stan' by!*"

He made one jump, tossed the helmsman aside as though he were chaff, and grabbed the wheel.

He flung the spokes over.

"*Hold hard all!*"

With a hiss and a roar the main-sail came across the deck, shoving the lee-rail deep under the seas till they raced over it. The *Lucky* rose slowly from the strain, heading for the red glare.

"Get yer burtons on the lee dory! I calls for men ter save them poor devils on th' Frenchman! *Men* step out, cowards stay where ye be!"

"I—you know—I'm ready; but—you know—sir, *ye* ain't fit ter go, a-havin' so hard a bark as ye has, sir—you know—a-beggin' your pardon."

Johnson glared at him. Not intimidated in the least, Uncle Sam approached the skipper and laid his hand on the great, wet arm. "Ye see, sir, it's like this: ye've got a feerful bark—cough, sir—and might get t' newmony out in t'at

sea, sir. Best go below an' bide till us gets back. I—I—you know—I'll do whut I kin, sir, I will. Now don't ye go, Cap'n, please?"

Anger at the doryman's presumption boiled within the skipper, but his heart echoed to the warmth of the rough man's kindness, and he couldn't "call him down." Instead he patted the old man on the shoulder, while the gale droned and shrieked, and the salt of the waters dampened both with red-reflected drops and streams.

"Lives is to be saved, Uncle Sammy. What's mine if I can save people? Nothin', man—nothin'!" he roared, then coughed violently. "No, Sammy, ye mean well, man, and I ain't ongrateful, but ye'd do th' same ef ye was in my place!"

"I—you know—I would, sir." The old fellow turned his head away.

Burberry pushed his way through the men. "That's the talk, Sammy! Show these yere youngsters how to do it!" He tore off his jacket, kicked the heavy boots from him. "Now, come on, ye lubbers, hist away!"

"How 'bout the money, sir? It's 'ere, sewed in my sock!" Uncle Sam screeched.

"Tar an' blazes—'tain't no time fur money—let it bide thar! It's *lives* we're playin' with!" Johnson thundered. Then, "Out wi' the dory, *now!*" He brought the *Lucky* into the wind.

The seas climbed in over her bows, washing metallicly away the anchor-chain and pouring in a cold stream down the forecastle hatch. With a clash and a bang the dory settled into the seas.

"Take th' wheel, Olaf, and stan' by till we gets back! Show a light, too!"

The skipper sprang into the tossing dory, the mate a close second, then Uncle Sam and three others.

"Shove off, dang ye, afore we gets stove in!"

Johnson seized an oar to steer with.

"Pull, ye lobsters, *pull!*"

Away they went, breaching the seas, climbing over them, coasting into their great valleys straight for the dimming light on the *St. Cyr.*

"Nasty place, Cap'n!" Burberry thundered into Johnson's ear. The latter nodded. "There's more grim faces 'n pleasant in the Straits this

blow. *Easy—easy,* men; she's breaking up fast!"

He stood up, full height to the strength of the wind, half leaning against the sweep.

The spray flew on him, streamlets of the ocean trickling from his face that shone curiously in the fading red glare.

"Thar goes her for'mast. *Pull,* men! Ef ye have hearts in ye, *pull* 'em out! Look at the poor suckers in the main-riggin'—*look* at 'em, like rats when th' water washes over their toes! God—see her pound! She's on t' outside rocks with fifteen fathom astern of her! Ef she slips off, it's the last call for all hands! Come on, bully boys—mind *this* one! *Starn all!*"

Rushing, tearing towards them, a terrible "breaker" shot out the light. The dory rose, and still climbed, until it seemed as though her bow would strike the low-hanging clouds. Johnson was far below the bowman. With a quick heave and a drop, they slid down the other side—safe.

"*Now, men, now!*"

Sculling, in his desperate efforts to forge

ahead, the skipper urged the crew on, coughing between shouts. A hundred yards ahead of them the *St. Cyr* pounded and ground on the ledge at every sea. They of the dory could hear her timbers crack and snap. The signal dimmed fast.

Fifty yards—thirty—twenty.

"In bow—get yer line ready!"

Fifteen yards now!

The broken surges cast by the wrecked schooner washed powerfully against them, drenching their bodies again and again.

"Ah-o-oy!"

Johnson put all the strength of his lungs into the deep roar.

"Sauvè! Sauvè!"

He could hear the shrill cries of the Frenchmen, and saw them swarm from the rigging onto the half-awash deck.

"Stan' by ter catch my line!"

He saw them huddled together by the mainmast, afraid to come aft.

"Da—" Coughing interrupted him. "Go on you, mate, tell the fools to belay!"

"Come aft—a-ft!" Burberry howled.

One figure sprawled to the stern.

"Three hard pulls, men—*together!* HEAVE!"

The figure caught the long painter and made fast.

Cra-a-ash bang—rrr—mmmm—m—thump! The seas yanked and tugged at the dory.

"Come ab-oa-rd!" The skipper's face was livid with exertion.

Not a move, not a sign from the schooner. Only the foam-hidden men crouching amidships.

Thrashing and clanging, the tangle of the broken foremast *r-ii-ped* alongside.

Then, without a word of warning, Uncle Sam crawled over the bowman, caught hold of the painter, and jumped into the boiling seas.

"Get him back, damn you there for'ard! I wouldn't lose him fur all the Frenchmen in France!"

Too late.

By the faint light they could see the old seaman working his way along, now on the crest of the wave, then smothered in the darkness beyond.

They watched then, silently, knowing that what could be done Uncle Sam would do.

"I—you know—I'm aboard; an' lives is t' be saved!"

As from miles away the faint yell reached them.

"Thank God!" Johnson muttered. Then: "Heave 'em onto the painter! We kin carry nine!"

"Ay, ay, sir!"

Silence again but for the pounding, billowing roar of the seas.

"Here comes th' first!"

They gathered the forlorn shape into their arms. Johnson looked at its white face.

"God, it's Bourgeot!"

He kicked the almost unconscious man under his feet, stepping on his arms and body in contempt.

One, two, three, four, five, six slid their awful way to the dory, were gathered in and stowed.

"Can't find no more, sir!" Uncle Sam's hail was very faint; then, "Hol' on, sir, till I looks for'ard!"

"She's agoin', Cap'n, damn soon!"

Burberry, his muscles standing out in great knots on his arms and chest, watched.

The combers washed double-reef high on the main-mast at times.

"Hill-o-o!"

"My w-ife, Capitaine!" Bourgeot struggled to rise.

Johnson stamped on him.

"Ah-o-oy?"

"Here's a—you know—woman unsensible! There's nobody else left. I'll—you know—make her fast t' th' painter. Stan' by ter haul in!"

Before Johnson could say a word the strain on the line eased.

"He's cast off, Cap'n!" the bowman screamed, pulling in with all his might.

"Get the blasted woman aboard; dang ye, *haul!*"

Johnson, wild with anger, danced a tattoo on the French skipper.

"Out oars! Pull for the schooner! Pull the souls out'n yerselves!"

"Hark! Uncle Sam's singin' out!"

Burberry heard the old fellow's voice above the storm. They lay on their oars.

"Don't come no nigher, Cap'n, she's slippin' off now; an' don't pay no money, incause—you kno-ow—he's loaded wi' rocks. He's hove a lot out for speed. I seen 'em below. I'm agoin' ter jump an' try ter swim for ye. If I don't reach—you kn-o-ow, make it—ye'll find th' money in m' sock, ashore. Did ye get the—"

"*She's gone!*"

Five deep voices said it at once, as with a sag and a splurge the *St. Cyr* vanished.

Without a word these five men watched the curling seas astern of where the Frenchman had gone to her last berth. Two hours they battled there, then had to give it up and make for the *Lucky's* light beyond.

Not a word was spoken, but the thought of every man was of Uncle Sam.

The dory came alongside.

One by one the rescued were passed over the rail.

"Where's dat Oncle Sam?" Olaf asked, as they hoisted the dory in.

In the faint light of the ship's lantern, the schooner roaring and rollicking on her course, Johnson lifted his sou'wester and stood bare-headed to the gale.

"Uncle Sam, boys — Uncle — Sa-am has dropped anchor in th' Great Harbor beyond, because there was lives to be saved."

They took off their caps in silence, while the seas fumed, and then turned away, whispering:

"God bless ye, Uncle Sam!"

VII

TO'MIE'S LUCK

"SHE don't be blawin' a bitt'y breeze!" To'mie Ellison whispered to himself, as he eased his main-sheet off an inch or two.

It was the morning after the "big storm." To windward the breakers dashed their spray high on Flower's Ledges; from the angle of his vision, squatting in the stern-sheets, it seemed to fly as high as the light. Yet there was scarce a wind on the surface of the water. Shining down on these solemn, mountainous rolls of green, the sun gave out much rest and warmth.

To'mie's eyes wandered far and near, noting the unbroken surge in the passage before him, and its foam-flecked masses on either side. He shifted his tiller to port a bit. Slowly lifting first stern, then bow, as easily falling, the cod-

boat slid ahead, just a faint eddying from the rudder showing that she moved. "Hope I do be able get dem lines!" he muttered again, the strong, young face anxious. To'mie Ellison was bound for Flower's Cove village for lines wherewith he and his father should repair their cod-trap that had been badly torn and balled in "the storm." The lad left the mouth of the Forteau long before daylight, with a spanking breeze abaft the beam; it was all gone now, and he was in a hurry. "I'll be zeein' Mart'y!"

His eyes brightened at the thought; even out here, alone on the sea, his weather-beaten cheeks flushed a deeper red. The boat drove on, he letting his arm swing loosely with the swash of the tiller. Overhead long banks of great, high-sided clouds drifted past, huge things of fleecy white and gray, with spots of far-distant blue between. The air was soft, laden with the strength of the ocean. Then the fore-sail dropped flat, the wee jib slatted and was straight up-and-down. The main-sail wavered, and it too slackened till the sheets rubbed against his shoulders. He made the ropes fast, got out the

long sculling-oar. To and fro, with dipping haul and rising push, he forced the boat over the swells, nearing the village rapidly.

In the bright light its houses, long thin wharves, and cod-sheds, seemed as a little city, though in truth there were but fifty all told. The smoke that twined upward from be-clayed and timbered chimneys rose as wisps of blue towards the blue above, vanishing in the upper air, fading into the oneness of the whole.

Cre-eek—Thl-up—Cre-eek—Thl-up—Thl-up—Grrr-shp!

The craft struck on the beach harshly, sliding her forefoot, groove-fashion, among the pebbles. To'mie jumped out, hauled his grappling clear from under the bow decking, untangled its line, drew it to full length, and sank the iron prongs as far as they would go, under his iron-shod heel. Down-sail then, and snug-up! But eighteen years old, yet To'mie knew how to cuddle a sail neatly and make fast. All secured, he walked up the shingle.

A few sledge-dogs ambled towards him, grinning with vicious fangs as he patted them.

There was one house—a tiny cottage almost hidden behind the piles of winter's wood—that held his eyes.

"I be bessis get de lines fust!" He started off in the opposite direction, hesitated. "Naw, I be goin' zee Mart'y! She'll be no have zeed me coome, an' I'll z'prise she!" He swung off abruptly to the right, rattling the round beach-stones as carefully as he could. Beyond him men were working, putting out their cod to dry. The figures were as spots of black, moving mysteriously to the thunder of the clashing, deadened roar of waters on the ledges. He met no one.

With eyes a-glint in the anticipation of a surprise for the girl, To'mie stole from wharf to wharf, creeping under the barnacle-laden pilings, picking his way across heaps of cast-off lobster-bodies—red mounds that showed more red in the sun. Taking advantage of a stacked wood-rick, he got to within ten yards of the door. There he stopped.

A white, clean, neat cottage with vines that tried to grow their way high on the rackety

piazza, and some hardy flowers, whose attempt at life was a brave one; that was Mart'y's home.

To'mie felt for his neckerchief, straightened it on his broad throat, jerked the hair that *would* tumble over his eyes back, hitched his coarse trousers a bit higher, and darted for the door.

"*I* zeed ye coomin' under Bill's wharft!"

To'mie stood fast.

She was a picture of the huge, great life, this girl Mart'y that laughingly looked from the sill on the embarrassed Labradorian.

She jumped down, closing the door behind her, and came close to him. He shivered and drew a deep breath. "What you be doin' here?"

"Coome to get lines fur de trap," he murmured, his eyes flowing over her.

"Ye'd bessis be gettin' 'm, den!" The girl turned back.

"Zee, zee!" To'mie flung himself towards her. "Dere's no breeze fur to get home wi'. I's got all day, Mart'y! Won't 'ee coome a bitt'y walk wi' me?"

She leaned her face so that it shone full on him. "Yiss, an' w'y for?"

"I—I— Oh, ye *knaw*, Mart'y, what I gotter zay?"

For an instant she did not answer, he waiting, feverishly. She looked back at the door, stared for seconds at the windows, whose rough shutters glared in all their unkempt, unplaned coarseness; then, step by step, she approached him. He opened the gate; she went first, and he followed.

"Coome right back, you!"

Dan Fredericks, Mart'y's father, lumbered round the corner of the house. His voice came in growled words and deep-chested sounds of anger. The girl drew closer to To'mie. He put his hands in his pockets and began to whistle jauntily.

"I'se won' na have ye goin' wi' t' likes of '*un!*" Old Fredericks slung this at her viciously, jerking a crabbed thumb towards To'mie. "Hain't I tol' ye so offen 'nough 'fore—hein? Neow git ye ter yer scrubbin', an' be darn lively 'bout it!"

"Stay whar ye be, Mart'y!" As he spoke the tall young figure moved up to Fredericks. "An'

I zay she be goin' ter walk wi' me s' long az she wants ter go!"

The old man clinched his gnarled, dirty fists and thrust them under To'mie's nose. "*Ye zay?* An' whut be *ye* but a Labrad'r rat, a mis'ble cod-hauler. God 'live, ef I woz whut I uset ter be I'd knock ye down an' stomp t' face offen yer head, ye pup!" Fredericks' hands shook with rage; he shuffled his feet with fighting instinct.

To'mie smiled down at him. "Yer zome'at crazy, Dan, de mornin'."

"I'se 'll slap yer baby face, ye Labrad'r *dog!*" The old man drew his hand back. To'mie went a step nearer and stuck his head forward, hands still in his pockets. The girl caught her breath quickly, and watched the two with parted lips—frightened.

"Slap 'way, ef ye wantz ter."

Fredericks looked into the steady gray eyes and saw the restrained glare that burned from them. His hand dropped. "She'll no ha' a cussed cent o' whut I got! No, sir, not a cent, not a lobs'er-pot, not a trap—*na'thin!*"

"Zay, Dan"—To'mie's voice was very quiet —"fur why ye do na want Mart'y ter go erlong o' me?"

"'Cos Bill Benoit, he wants her, an' he-'un's got some'at ter keep her liv' on; da's fur why, an' fur-why 'nough!" He was sullenly angry now, and afraid of the strong man.

To'mie was quick-witted. The slavery of the sea makes men that. They *have* to be so, or die. He heard Mart'y's little gasp when her father mentioned Benoit, and instantly grasped her feelings. "An' how be it dat 'un Benoit hez money?" Fredericks hesitated. To'mie rushed on. "Et be zince de *Winnie* gang' shore w'en de crew woz all"— he paused before the next word—"*drownded!*"

The father swung on his heel. "Go ter hell wi' her, if ye like, but ye'll starve afore ye gits there! Not a cent, not a pot, not a—" His voice trailed off as he disappeared.

"Coome 'long, Mart'y."

The two walked on in silence. She, with woman's quickness, saw that he was very troubled. Women are women the world round;

they admire and respect determination and strength, but they balance their own status against it.

Gulls screamed, beating the air with long pinions, wheeling and darting across the beach, diving to the water for caplin, or some choice bit of dead fish. The sun was high on its upward course, and the shadows of the two were short, squat things that moved as they moved, distorted by the unevennesses of the rocks.

They were out of sight of the houses, hidden behind a long, gray point of cliff. He took her hand in his big paw, and they strolled on slowly, she with eyes that unconsciously noted the graceful waving of the sea-weed masses as they were wafted, curling in branched tendrils, among the bowlders by the surge, he looking out over the vast liquid monotone of green and gray. The mysterious power of the sea held his glance. Shifting, moving with regular beat of rise and fall, reflecting the sunlight, showing the watery caverns between heights clear and ugly, the ocean rushed ahead impassively, each roller to

find its frothing, foaming end against the year-worn rock.

An indefinable haze trembled across the horizon; it consisted of heat-thrills, wavy threads of shimmering atmosphere that covered the length of the water's breast with delicate films of interlacing design. The sodden pound as the seas tumbled to shattered deaths, and the hoarse bickerings of crows in the pine and Vir behind were the only sounds.

The two sat down on a flat stone where there was room for both.

To'mie looked at her.

She was piling up little cairns of pebbles with the toes of her heavy shoes.

Mart'y Fredericks was a typical specimen of thorough girlhood and womanhood. Her figure was strong, well-put-up, and in proportion. A thick shirt-waist of some spotted material covered broad shoulders and a straight back. A little scarf, that denoted the femininity of its wearer—blue-and-white striped—was thrown round her neck, its ends tucked in between buttons. Her skirt was heavy and reached to her

ankles in deep folds. The black stockings were home-made, warm, and fuzzy. To'mie loved her. He had loved her a long time—nearly a year.

"Wull ye marry me, Mart'y?"

She looked at him, and her shoes ceased playing among the pebbles. "I'se 'd like ter—*want ter*," she put in, quickly, seeing the pain in his eyes. "But, To'mie, 'uns hasen't money ter be married, has 'uns?"

He picked up a bit of driftwood and slithered it between his powerful fingers.

"Pap, he's sot on Bill fur me, an' Bill's got money, To'mie!"

He stared straight into her blue eyes, and she winced at their blow.

"But I *do* love *yer*, To'mie, an' ef ye had 'nough fur us 'n' bot-th, I'd marry ye."

"I hain't got it, Mart'y, an' I be powerful zad. I can no' take ye ter 'uns home ter Forteau, 'cose it bean't fit fer 'e, an' 'twould no' be fair t' ast t' old man t' feed an' ke'p ye." A long silence between the two then, each keeping their own position on the flat rock. "Z'posin' I

had t' money, Mart'y? We's c'ld be married, an' 'uss w'ld be happy *den*, yiss?" And then these two discussed what they would do had they money enough to marry.

They built a house on the field that Tom Wills had for sale—a fine, six-roomed house—and they planned how the garden should be laid out.

"Ye'd have to have a corner fur t' kids, Mart'y!"

"Why, 'f course! We'd put 'em in cribs *here*." She drew the plan with her finger on the sand.

"An' t' pigs? Dere hain't no sty yit?"

"Over dere!" The girl made more lines. "See, To'mie, dat 'll have ter be t' place fur de cow an' horse, an' *dat*"—placing her thumb on a corner of her sand home—"dat 'll be de stable."

He watched it all with patient interest, dreaming of what might be—*if!*

"T' fence, Mart'y; whur a'll it be at?"

"Why, yere, roun' de whole place, wid little, sharp-p'inted, w'te-painted stakes, an'—" She chanced to look at him.

The dream-house, the dream-garden, the dream-children, and the pigs all dwindled away. Only the *boo-oom* of the surf and the crawking of the crows remained. The bitterness in his eyes, the absolute hopelessness of it all dispelled the visions of happiness that they had had.

"Benoit!" she whispered, her hands pulling at her skirt nervously—"Benoit!"

To'mie heard. "Yiss, Bill Benoit, 'cos—'cos—" He broke down and turned away, breathing hard.

The vastness of nature hung over the two, with its sun's beams of warmth and its life.

"No, Mart'y," he said, very low—"no. 'Tain't right—ter ast ye ter marry *me*. I'm zad, Mart'y"—he looked full at her, gritting his teeth—"fearful zad."

His head sank between his hands. She felt for him and for herself; but bread is bread and hunger is hunger in the north. She knew that, therefore her *seeming* callousness.

His eyes wandered again over the beach. "What's that, yon'?" He stood up.

A faint, black thing lay on the rocks far from

them, the seas crumbling near it. They went on—she dreaming still, he realizing his helplessness.

"'Tis a man!" he shouted, springing on with long bounds. Mart'y followed as best she could, stumbling over the moss and weed-laden stones.

They stared at the body together. A draggled, sea-tossed form, with matted hair and gray-white face, on which a big bruise showed where some rock had struck the flesh, lay at their feet. Its hands were strained and drawn, gripping a board; the legs were slack, nerveless, and limp.

She knelt beside the body, turned it over easily, ripped the soaked shirt open and laid bare a hairy chest. She put her ear to it.

"'Un's aliv'! *Mos' gone*, To'mie! Must 'a' coome f'om de Frenchman dat struck on de Ledges las' night. Pull off 'n 'uns socks; slap 'uns feet."

To'mie obeyed. The right sock peeled from a clammy foot. He tugged at the other; it held to the ankle. He yanked harder, and it came away, strewing the cobbles with hundred-dollar

and fifty-dollar bills. Nearly pulp they were, but quite recognizable and green.

She looked at him, letting the man's head fall back on her knees. To'mie stared at the money, then at the girl, and back again to the sodden bills.

"*Iss* 'un 'live?" he asked, in a mutter.

Mart'y nodded slowly. "No' goin' live long time, 'less us do fur 'm," she added.

"Hundreds of dollars!" he thought—"'nough ter marry her, an' nobody 'ld knaw."

The girl saw what worked in his mind. She wanted to marry him, but not at *this* price.

"An' ye say ye want ter marry me? Ye wants me ter *love* ye?"

To'mie looked at her as the words pierced his honest soul.

He gathered the money, folding it carefully, and put it inside his rough shirt. Not a word between the two then, while they labored to revive the man.

"You—you—know—it's—in—m' sock, Cap'n —don't—pay—" The thin tones died. This was their reward.

"Us 'll have t' take 'un t' Benoit's," she said, decisively.

"Ay—'tis de neares' house," he answered.

She crooked her arms about the limp feet; To'mie seized the shoulders by their armpits.

Sinking now, the sun's rays lanced in thwarting shafts across the two that bore one, and the sea thrumbled on with gigantic noise and foam. They trudged forward, stopping often to rest. Their burden was inert, but Mart'y could still hear his heart beating faintly. From the point where they had found the body to Alex Benoit's house was nearly a mile; it took them an hour to cover the distance.

Alex was at home, so was Jake. François and Nicola, the other two brothers, were not in sight. Old Alex was a remnant of the French on the west shore of Newfoundland; his "boys" were half-breeds. Indeed, some say that they were no better than quarter-breeds.

"Hola, Mart'y an' Tome, w'at you got dere?" The greasy face bent over their load.

"Sapristi!—tonnerre! eet vone drownded feller

aliv'! Va tu"—to Jake, whose bulk filled the doorway—"get hot wataire an' blankets!"

To'mie would not let go his end of the body. "Let be! let be!" he said, gruffly, when Alex tried to assist.

By many efforts and shiftings, the limp form was finally placed on a low bed. The girl undid the row of soggy button-holes and opened the man's coarse undershirt. "Yiss, To'mie, 'un lives *yit!*" she said, to his inquiring look.

"Ma chère, who ees?" Jake leaned over her kneeling form.

To'mie measured him, gauging his strength with jealous, hungry eyes.

"Do na knaw. Me an' To'mie finded 'm ashore clost ter Caplin Riff."

"Ah-ha! Dat feller he vos los' las' naight w'en de *St. Cyr* she strike. Mais"—Alex studied the man's face—"he no Frenchmans; he American—dat feller!" While he muttered and cursed, Mart'y got the blankets round the man and fell to chafing his hands hard. "Say, Mart'y, dere vos notting on heem in monnaie—hein?"

She shivered with repulsion at the loathsome brute face leering into hers.

"Naw!" A swift glance passed between To'mie and her.

Father and son stood back then, while the two worked desperately.

Dank and cod-reeking, the dim interior was cheerless. A cold, black stove glinted in the candle-light, and a wooden clock ticked with mournfully brittle ticks. Everything seemed saturated with fish-reek. Even To'mie was nauseated by the stench. No sound outside the house save the all-pervading thrumble and splash of the seas. No movement within except that caused by the girl's quick hands—chafe, chafe, chafe, and rub, rub, rub. Then the man opened his eyes—blinked them.

"T' money's in m' sock—you know; it's in m' *sock!*" He stared dazedly about. "Whar' be I?" He struggled up, though the girl tried to hold him, and reached for his left foot. He felt the bare flesh and sank back with a groan. "Ye've robbed Sam Simmons when he—you know—was mos' drown'd! Cap'n! *Cap'n!*"

No answer. "Cap'n, I—you see—I got 'shore an' had t' money, but—y' know—dey's robbed me!—*Cap'n?*" Sam Simmons dropped back, unconscious again.

To'mie leaned over him. As he did, the roll of money fell on the bed. He tried to get it back unseen, but Alex was watching; so was Jake.

The old man seized a heavy iron poker. "We's make divide—hein? A leetle tap—*so!*" he swung the metal with a swish—"an' nobodee know—hein? Vee hide heem w'ere nobodee fin'! Vee have monnaie togedder. Ah-ha!"—shaking his fingers towards To'mie—"you t'ink you goin' have all yourself! Dat not nice—non—plus fair-play. I vant halfs fur me an' Jake."

His father's blood—Jack Ellison's—the best man out of Labrador's blood—sang out then in To'mie, the son. "Ye zay I *robbed* 'un? Ye t'inks *I'll* be wid ye ter murder 'm an' divide? *Thiss* bean't like th' *Winnie*, ye old wrecker ye!"

Mart'y crawled on the bed beside the unconscious man, for she knew what was coming.

Alex Benoit gripped the poker high up. Jake grabbed a club of firewood from the box. The lad wrenched a leg from the table and backed into the corner.

"Coome on, ye killers!"

And they went at him.

Blow on blow, till splinters flew from Jake's club, Alex meanwhile seeking to get in a smashing end to it all with the poker. To'mie waited his chance, saw it, and laid Alex flat by a backhanded swing that caught the old renegade fairly on his temple.

"It's me an' you now!" They walked about each other warily, Jake with the club of wood, To'mie with the table-leg. The girl peered from over the foot-board of the bed.

She did not see that Sam Simmons's eyes were open and that he watched, too.

"T' hell wi' ye!" Jake brought down an awful blow. To'mie dodged, and the girl's breath came faster. "Ye t'inks ye goin' have Mart'y?"

All the pent-up fury burst from To'mie then.

The interior rang to the clash of wood and the mudded thumps, as one or the other landed a blow. The sounds of their breath rose above the *ro-o-om* of the ocean outside.

"Ye—ye—ye! feel that!—an' that!—an' *that!*" To'mie, as he crashed the last drive home on Jake's head, looked to her.

The hulk of a man lay at his feet, moving slightly.

Her hands were tightly clasped, her eyes shining with excitement. "Have 'un killed 'm?" she whispered. To'mie leaned on his table-leg and stared at the two bodies. His glance wandered round the wrecked room.

"Do no' knaw!" he muttered.

"Say—you know—yer—a—a—great—you know—fighter—b' God, y' are!"

Sam Simmons was sitting up, salt water trickling from his nose yet. "I—you know—on'stand t' whole—thing! Yer's good 's a—you know—Glo'c'sterman! Holy devils—*look out!*" he croaked, hoarsely. Mart'y gave a quick cry of warning, too.

François and Nicola had sized up the situa-

tion from the windows. One held an axe, the other a long-handled adze. They could not get at their guns, because these stood in a corner of the fighting-room.

"Diable tu!" Nicola shouted, slashing at To'mie with the axe. The lad side-stepped, and the bit sank deep in the boards just where he had stood. Before the Frenchman could recover, To'mie fetched a hard rap over his right arm. Something cracked; Nicola howled with rage and pain. Meanwhile, François tried to get in where he could swing his adze. Sam Simmons rolled and tossed and coughed on the bed, striving to get on his feet, but he was too weak. All that he could do was to croak warnings, because he could see the two Frenchmen against the light of the door and windows. "Get back, ye lubber! Keep yer corner—you know—they can't hit ye thar!"

The girl crouched, panic-stricken now, for she saw that To'mie was getting tired, and she knew what would happen to her and to the man she and To'mie had saved if the fight went against them. She felt so pitifully helpless! *What*

could she do? She asked herself this time and time again, while the curses of the struggling men filled the darkened room with blasphemy and awful words.

The adze splintered chips from the beams, dug chunks of wood from the floor; but To'mie managed to keep clear, rapping and smashing with his table-leg, that was fast splitting away in his hands.

The combatants stood apart then, each breathing deep and hard. "You, Tome, ve goin' keel you, par Dieu!" Nicola gasped. He leaned down, got his toe under Alex's body, and rolled it aside. François hauled Jake into a corner. Nicola's eyes wandered to the guns. To'mie saw that look. "Dey's 'll shoot me!" And he charged them.

Cru-ump—sw-u-up!

Shrrr-at—swisssh!

Wood and steel answered each other.

He was tired; his arms ached and his shoulders throbbed with pain.

Slowly, step by step, they drove To'mie into his corner.

The girl was standing by the bed now.

"Ha!" Nicola picked up the overturned table and hurled it at To'mie. It fell with a resounding *cra-ack*, hemming the lad in.

"Now, by gar!" François started for the guns. In the gloom he dashed full onto a muzzle. "Ye dod-gasted thieves, ye! Drop yer anchor an'—you know—h'ist a white flag, or—you know—we'll bust ye open!"

Nicola ran to his brother's aid. "Ye'd best stop!" The girl's voice rang out clear. He could just see a glint of metal pointed at him. He stood still.

Thus the five were in the semi-darkness for several instants, neither daring to move, because the guns were loaded, To'mie, staggering with weakness, behind the table.

"Allons!" Nicola yelled. He fell to his knees and dashed towards Mart'y.

Bang! The flash lighted everything.

She had missed. The next second Nicola had seized her by the throat.

"Tu diable!" he snarled, wrenching the gun from her. As she fell back, her senses fleeting

under the rough fingers, she heard more sounds of fighting.

"What in hell's all this row?" Skipper Johnson, Burberry and Olaf at his heels, jumped into the room.

"Stan' by, Cap'n, fur trouble, I'm—"

"*Uncle Sam*, bullies, an' alive! Clear 'em out, dang em! Want the money, I s'pose! Lively, now, ye lobsters! Show yer fists an' use 'em! Come on—here goes!" Everything was a roar of blows and *thuds*.

"Ye would, eh? Taste that!" Skipper Johnson drove his heavy boot true into the pit of Nicola's stomach, dim as the light was. The Frenchman collapsed. François still fought on, holding off Burberry and Olaf. The skipper joined them with a rush. They all three piled on and crushed fists into the other's face and chest.

"He's got what he's lookin' for, I guess!" the skipper said, lifting his knees from the quiet figure. He went over to the bed. "Get a light,

Burberry; it's darker'n Davy Jones! Uncle Sam's some'eres 'ereabouts!"

"Darn my timbers!" Uncle Sam ejaculated, as a match flared. "Chuck me off'n th' davits ef that frog-eater didn' putty near double-reef m' windpipe!" He got on his feet slowly. Meanwhile Olaf, finding a candle under the wreckage of tables, shelves, and washing-board, lighted it. Uncle Sam looked at the four that lay inert.

"By gravvy, we fixed 'em!" he chuckled. "But ef it hadn' been for thet youngster thar—Ahoy! He's in stays! Stan' by ter pull 'm on the wind!" Skipper Johnson hauled To'mie from behind the table. The lad was unconscious, his face black in places where the Frenchman's clouts had struck. Burberry got water and dashed a pailful over him.

A strange, grim scene it was. The candle wavered vacantly, the fat running down in corrugated rows and piling round its foot. The girl was at To'mie's side, smoothing his matted hair. Silence among the group, save for a chill wind that grew as they stood, and *whee-e-ed*

about the house, sneaking in the cracks, whistling under the raw-shingled eaves, eddying through the doorway. And over it all, as a distant *bo-oom* of sullenness, came the pound—pound—pound of the sea.

These great, gaunt men of the great, gaunt ocean's life crowded round the girl and To'mie, whole-souled in their sympathy and admiration. Then the lad opened his eyes. He saw Mart'y first.

"Did dey get de money?" he whispered.

"No, To'mie! Ye fought a grand fight, an' de money's here." She reached under his shirt and drew out the roll of bills.

His half-closed eyes shone with satisfaction, and he searched the faces. Finding Uncle Sam's: "Give it to 'un, Mart'y! 'Tis his-un!" pointing to the old seaman.

She passed the wet mass over silently. To'mie watching every movement that she made.

Skipper Johnson watched, too, a curious smile on his lips; but he said nothing—neither did Burberry.

To'mie got up then, buttoned his shirt and

coat. "Le's be goin', Mart'y, an'—" He turned to Uncle Sam. "I'se glad ter hev' found ye, zor; on'y, wid'out *she*"—looking at the girl—"ye mought 'a' been not w'ere yer be! She holp me zave de money." He started fur the door, stepping over the Frenchman.

The skipper filled the entrance with his big body.

"Wait er minute, youngster. Who be you?"

"To'mie Ellison, f'om Forteau, Labrador."

Johnson stared at him. Burberry and Olaf stared.

"Yer father's Jack Ellison?"

"Yiss, zor."

"Well, say, To'mie, don't ye 'member Cap'n Johnson?" The skipper's voice was pathetically eager.

To'mie looked hard at him; then, in the faint light, his face became suffused with a new glow.

"Yiss, I do—now; but ye've got gray an' old sin' de time I zeed ye last! Father's bin alookin' ter zee ye coome year affer year, but de *Luckee*, she niverr lifted 'roun' de Point!"

They shook hands, the grizzled, tall skipper and the lad—both hands.

"An' now, what's all this?"

Uncle Sam, the girl, and To'mie told the story. Johnson listened carefully, head on one side, chewing hard at his quid.

"An' why don't ye marry her?" he asked, abruptly.

To'mie looked at the girl; she glanced back. Both were silent.

"Come, come, ye lubbers, cast off an' sail away! I'm awaitin'!"

And they told him of their poverty, of their struggle for life.

"'Tis no' fair," To'mie finished, "t' ast father t' keep us, be it?"

Johnson did not answer at once. He walked to the door and peered out into the night.

Off shore, half a mile, was the riding-light of a schooner, glinting like a star over the long-rolling waters. The wind crooned ever so wistfully through the Vir, dying away to soft, bough-swept sounds that filled the air with lulling, sighing peace. Each star that glimmered seemed to

pierce its light-years more brightly, and the nebulous, vacuous gleam of the northern lights shed a now fading, then flashing sheen over sea and land. The crests of the deep-sea roll sparkled, bursting with mighty foam on the pebbles.

"Ahoy, boat!" Skipper Johnson's voice carried far.

"Coming, sir!" a voice answered from somewhere to the southward.

"Where's the parson live—you, To'mie?"

"Bean't none, zor."

"Got a mag'strate t' Flower's Cove?"

"Yiss—Mister Pike."

"Come on, then."

They all got aboard the big American dory, leaving the Frenchmen as they lay.

Johnson made a signal by Coston light to the schooner. In answer to it they could hear the "Och—hai, ach ho! Och—hai—i, och—ho!" as her anchor was walked aboard.

"Damned lucky we struck ashore here to look fur Uncle Sam, eh, mate?"

Burberry nodded and Olaf grinned. They came to the village, and beached the dory.

"Say, girl, you love To'mie Ellison 'nough ter marry him? No wind-jammin', now! Speak up!"

"Yes, sir," the girl answered.

The six went on in silence.

"'Ain't got no money, zor, t' marry Mart'y wi'," To'mie anxiously muttered to the skipper.

"You do 's yer told an' ask no questions, ye lubber! I 'low no back talk!"

"Ahoy—Pike!" Johnson shouted. His voice carried through the deserted little street, waking the pigs that grunted a rapid escape, disturbing sheep that fled with patterings of hard feet, annoying a cow—she stood up and lowed, shaking her head in the rising moonlight.

"Where ye bin, ye drat?" Old Alex grabbed Mart'y by the arm. She gave a small sound at the pain of his fingers.

Skipper Johnson turned. "Who in hell 're you?"

The Newfoundlander shrank from the big man. "I'm her father, an' I won't hev' her goin' roun' wi' To'mie Ellison an' t' likes o' 'un!"

"Look-a-here, ye shrimp ye!" Johnson laid one great fist on Alex. "You got ter keep off, a' mind ye don't foul *me!*"

Olaf leaned his great tawny head towards Alex, too. "Ke'p away, you!" he said, softly.

Old Alex let go of the girl, muttering threats of "when she's come home ag'in."

They got Magistrate Pike out of bed, and made him change his night-cap to the thing he prized most—his plush, tight-fitting skull-gear, that was worn only on special conditions.

Twelve feet tramped into his little parlor, waking a nondescript pup that barked and growled at them from beneath the sofa.

"Go on an' git married!" Skipper Johnson spit into the draught-hole accurately.

"I 'ain't got de rights t' marry her, zeein's I'se got no money," To'mie interrupted.

"Keelhaul ye fur a stowaway! *Do 's yer told!*" Johnson came up for'ard, as he called it. "Go on, Pike, cast off the lashin's on yer tongue; tie 'em up good an' fast! I'm witness, so's my mate!"

Thus they were married, To'mie and Mart'y.

Pike was frightened by the huge men that filled his wee parlor. He saw the face of old Alex peering through a window, glowering at him, but he went on bravely.

"Here's a weddin'-present to ye." Skipper Johnson took the damp roll from Uncle Sam and handed it to the girl. "May ye be as happy 's I've bin this thirty year."

They tried to thank him, overwhelmed as they were by the surprise of it all.

"Avast there! Avast! Ye've bin honest ter me, Sam Johnson, and I don't furget that! Now, all ab'rd fur th' *Lucky* an' Forteau!"

They yelled down the street in the moonlight, wakening echoes that had never been disturbed before. Old Alex intercepted them.

"Flash yer roll, girl!"

She showed her father the mass of green bills. He fawned at once.

Burberry saw him and administered a reminder that his presence was not required.

"An' if y'se wants t' find Jake an' Nicole an' François, go ye down t' look fer 'un!" To'mie added.

All on board the *Lucky*.

"Bullies!" Skipper Johnson shouted. They gathered amidships. "We're on a weddin'-party t' night, an' th' lad is To'mie Ellison, of Forteau! Up sail, lively, 'cos Mart'y—Mrs. Ellison, I sh'ld say—is watchin' ye! Let's see what ye kin do!"

The main-sail and fore-sail went up with cheers. The anchor came apeak lustily, and the *Lucky* was off, climbing, and sliding over the black seas.

"T'ank ye, Cap'n, I'se—"

"Stow yer gab, To'mie! Go below with th' wife. Ye'll use my cabin; an' move lively, 'cause cook 'll sing out damn soon."

VIII

ADRIFT

FROM the middle distances came the laughing croon of sunlit waves that ran and overran each other, all sparkling in the fierce glare of an August sun.

Domino Run, Labrador, was crowded with spars; even the gaunt, square-rigged Guernseymen were there, of lofty black top-sides and hogged shear.

The cliffs rose, shining-gray, on either side, and the little village to port twinkled cheerfully. Sunday afternoon it was, and all hands were "visitin'." Zeke Nelson, of Port Saunders, Newfoundland, was master of a craft of his own, and a dainty little "jack" she seemed—well down in the water with cod too.

The *Lucky* faced the tide a bit beyond, and

still farther a lumbering, bluff-bowed Nova Scotian swung with main-sail and fore-sail up waiting for slack water.

"A fine sight—eh, Burberry?" Skipper Johnson sat down on the *Lucky's* wheel-box.

"Ay, sir, a fine one, an' they's most all of 'em got a good 'stick' aboard!"

"Yes, fish 's been fust-rate this trip, never better, an'—"

"We've got all *we* kin stow away!" Burberry's great shoulders twitched in silent laughter.

"As I was erbout to say," the Skipper continued, evenly, and the mate "begged pardon" —"I'm damned glad of it, because it's my last cruise." His strong face turned away from the other abruptly, and welling drops gathered in the corners of his eyes. The powerful hands clinched and trembled. "My last cruise," he whispered, sadly.

Burberry stared at him open-mouthed. "I didn't hear ye, Cap'n, did I?"

Johnson looked at him. "You heard, mate, an' you heard right." Then he held out his

hand impulsively. "Shake, Burberry!" The two giant fists met in a convulsive grip, pain in the eyes of one man, unbelief and despair in the eyes of the other. "Hark to me, my mate."

Burberry squatted on the deck, his thoughts awhirl.

"Ye've stood by me night an' day now for twenty year, more 'r less, but 'bout that; ye've taken my swearin's an' grumblin's as a deep-sea man should, an' mate, it's Sunday, we ain't workin' officially, so I'll call ye Dick, be yer leave, an' you call me plain Sam. I've got the deck now—" as the other struggled to rise and speak, moisture in his eyes, too, for he loved his skipper with that strange animal devotion that is bred between man and man only on the open seas. "I'm gettin' old, Dick, an' m' timbers creak an' kind o' shiver at every sea; it's a long time since I come off'n the ways, Dick—a long, long spell ago, an' my cruise on the great damned ocean is p'utty nigh over. An' so, a-sittin' here as we be, you an' me, I kinder thought I'd shake a reef out o' my tongue, bein's as I'm lonely, an' talk to ye."

"Fur God's sake, Cap—Sam, don't talk that yarn, I'm gittin' wetter 'n in a heavy lop!" Burberry drew his sleeve across his face hard and coughed strenuously.

Johnson put an arm over the other's shoulder. "Don't 'fur God's sake,' Dick, it ain't no use. He'll do as He thinks best fur the lot o' us, an' me in pertickler. I'm seventy year old, er will be ter-morrow, an' my missus she was launched ten year after me, that makes her sixty years afloat;—an' her engine's givin' way, Dick—"

The other felt the sob. "Ye mean—?"

"Here!" Sam Johnson touched the left side of his chest. "Right there, an' I've got her last letter, the one we got from th' mail-boat back yonder t' Indian Tickle, ye mind? She's waitin' fur me to come home an' leg-go my anchor alongside, till th' chain o' life parts an' we drift away—somewheres; hope we don't fetch up in Hel-i-go-land, where it's hot—eh, Dick?" They chuckled sadly.

"She—th' missus 's sick?"

"Ever since our last kiddie"—he hesitated—"left us, she's been chafin' at her anchor; she

wants to get away, man, an' I don't blame her. Here I be, miles an' miles from home, an' she—alone in harbor; an' if I didn't leave her we'd dock in th' poor-house, out o' commission, an' then Potter's field in junk. I've had ter work hard all my sailin' days, an' in consequence I've worked my men hard, an' they've got a heap more out 'n it than me."

"Not a son-of-a-sea-cook ever was under ye that didn't *love* ye, Sam!"

"Ye think so, eh?" The old man's eyes were pathetically eager. "I'm rough, Dick—an' ready with m' foot, but I've been *just*, 'ain't I?"

Burberry put both hands on Johnson's knee, looking up at him as a child does to its father. "'Just' ain't the word, Sam—not the word. Ye've been a trainin'-ship to many's th' man that's skipper to-day; ye've helped 'em all ter git out 'n stays an' clap on sail, showed 'em how ter do it, told 'em what a sea-farin' fisherman should be, an', *sir*—" the mate stood up, taking off his cap—"Ye are the finest, most ablest, bravest—"

"Stow it, mate—stow it!"

"No, Cap'n, beggin' yer pardon, I'll mut'ny, sir, first, but I'll speak—bravest, fairest skipper that ever came out'n Glo'cester! *Thar!* sir."

At the last word Burberry dashed to the rail and hung over, trying to imitate a sneeze, but the hoarse sounds in his throat would not be choked down. He felt an arm around his neck, heard the voice he loved so much whispering. "Dick, it ain't no mutiny ter love yer skipper, an', besides, we ain't on th' high seas. Dick, don't leak above deck, man—*don't*, or I'll sing out t' pass a mop!"

Thus the two stood in the dying sunset lights that spread their sheen and splendor over the heavens in glorious darts and tinted shafts. To the west'ard long golden fingers stole athwart the night clouds, painting them all in the colors of the rainbow — violet, blue, green, yellow, and red; not in serried or set masses, but in spots and streams, in variety of groupings, that dazzled their eyes, satiated their senses by the power of things beautiful. And then they faded, these pennons of day. Night edged nearer and nearer. Banks of gray-black darkness and gloom

lifted suddenly from the east; the breeze dropped and the still waters of Domino Run mirrored numberless stars, all gleaming at their best.

Johnson turned suddenly. "'Twas a sundown like that when we was spliced forty-two year gone, missus and me; an' Dick, she was th' best o' th' fleet, so far as I was concerned. Mind ye, she had a lot of convoys, 'r whatever ye call 'em, hangin' to her hard, an' lettin' go broadsides o' bo-qets at her whenever *I* hove 'longside (knowin' I had no am'nition), but I, Sam Johnson, jest a kid then, makes up *my* mind an' captures her—th' missus!"

"How?"

The skipper laughed softly at the bringing up of days so long gone.

"How, Dick? Why, like this: I see'd where th' weak p'ints was, but mind ye she *wasn't* weak!" (This with an aggressive straightening of his shoulders.)

"No, Sam, course not!"

Satisfied, Johnson continued, his eyes watching the shooting-stars: "Ye see, it was a case of beatin' agin' a heavy ground-swell! I means

that t' other feller war'n't no deep-sea man, an' had a full cargo o' dollars. He had a kind o' make-believe yacht, too, a foolish thing that would only move when she had one sail on one side, an' one sail on the other side, an' two sails in th' middle!" They both laughed, and Burberry bit a huge piece from his plug, listening intently the while.

"The on'y reason he bought her, so far's I kin deescover, is that Lizzie she kind o' sheered off my way 'cause I was a deep-sea-hell-of-a-feller, with salt an' fish an' a kind o' deviltry 'bout me. He—Jim Fraser was his sailin' name—got a line on to the course I was steerin' with Lizzie, an' he buys hisself the *Lark*, fits her out No. 1, gits a master's license, meets me on th' street t' Glo'cester, an' tells me to go inter dry-dock fer repairs; *me*, mind ye, Dick!"

"—— —— fool!" the mate swore, softly.

"Well, I seen I was afoul of a shark, but I wouldn't leg-go, *no-sirree*, so I goes ter her house that same dog-gone night, an' dog-gone me if he war'n't a settin' up an' sailin' free with Liz. 'There's nobody at th' wheel,' says I to myself,

'here's where I take charge.'—'We're goin' fer a cruise ter Prince Edward Island,' says she, lofty-like, jest 's if she had all stay-sails set an' wishin' fer a balloon-jib besides! I tells ye, Dick, as 'tween man an' man, that I swore then one of the wussest swears that I'd git her or go to Davy Jones!"

"Fine fer you, Cap—er—Sam, but *how?*" Burberry forgot to chew in his interestedness.

"Look a-here, Dick, jest fer fun, whut would ye 'a' done?"

The mate thought, remembered his quid, gnawed at it hard, spat vigorously into the calm waters. "I'd hev' fixed it up s' that he couldn't git a crew to man her!"

Skipper Johnson smiled. "But ye must r'member that I was jest A.B. then, an' no money t' speak of. It costs dollars t' buy off a Glo'cester crew!"

Burberry puzzled again, while the evanescent northern lights sifted the upper air with veils and screens of eerie incandescence. Sometimes a curtain of scintillating gleam would drop, apparently to the waters, then it lifted, changed to

circles, arcs, parabolas, all moving, inter-blazoning with one another. Their curious glow showed the masts and rigging in Domino Run as towering black things, that reached up and vanished overhead.

"I don't know *how* ye did it!"

"Dick," Johnson's voice was very solemn, "I told ye I was a devil—or *had* deviltry in me, didn't I?"

"Ay, sir—Sam!"

"There was no safe anchorage fur me that night with Lizzie, so I made sail an' left! Then, says I, I'll put him ashore!"

"God, Cap'n!"

"No 'God' 'bout it, jest Sam Johnson. The *Lark* cleared from Glo'cester with Lizzie, her ma, an' Fraser—me a-watchin' with m' glasses. I bor'red two hundred dollars, an' took my course fer th' Gut o' Canso. What I was goin' ter do I had no chart fer; but I was after 'em, anyhow. I gits t' th' Gut, goes back by horse t' Chedabucto Bay, an' *prayin'* fur thick weather. It come! an' thicker'n I ever seen it, or you either. That same night it cleared off

fur an' hour an' I seen a schooner's lights t' th' sou'-sou'east. I knowed it was them, 'cause I noticed pertickler thet th' *Lark's* starb'rd light was higher 'n her port. She was standin' in fer th' Gut, 'bout four mile off shore. I gits a Kanuck, Archiquette was his name, to go in with me, an' I promised him th' cargo below hatches. 'How!' says he, willin' enough. An' there's where I was hard on a reef that stove holes in me. We went up to his berth—mind ye, Dick, the wind was a-blowin' up fast an' a nasty cross-sea a-growin'. He wanted ter show me his cattle—pigs, sheep, horses, an' such land-truck. But the lights o' th' *Lark* was a-comin'. 'Twarn't no use hurtin' his feelin's, so I goes out t' th' stable. He casts off on a horse an' leads him out. 'By God!' I sings out, a plan makin' fast in my mind. 'What's mattaire?' he says. 'Matter is yer horse is gone bad lame on the starboard side for'ard, but I kin save him, what'll you sell fer? He axes twenty dollars, I offers fifteen, an' I gits th' steed fur seventeen dollars and seventy-five cents—an' th' lights o' th' *Lark* still standin' inshore!"

"I see, *sure!*" Burberry interrupted. "You wanted 'nother horse to drive quicker wi' her back!" He paused. "But how 'bout landin' her?"

"Say, mate, after all these years seein' *me* think, h'ain't you got th' trick o' it yet?"

"Am thinkin'!" the other retorted.

"I can't hear it, then! But we're way off 'n our course. As I was sayin', I got th' steed. Now thar's two coves on the no'th side; one's got a good anchorage, t'other 's got a nice soft sand-bar, wi' mud mixed. I knows Fraser couldn't tell 'em 'part, bein' 's it was so thick. I gits a lantern, lashes a tin plate fer a shine, belays it to the horse's head, gits aboard o' him, an' moves slow an' steady along the beach on the sand-bar cove, calculatin' that Fraser never try fur the Gut that night."

"What in hell's the horse gotter do with it?"

"Oh, ye galoot, didn't I tell ye he was lame for'ard, an' bein' lame, wouldn't his head bob up an' down steady, an' bobbin' that way wouldn't it look like a ridin'-light, an' seein' a ridin'-light wouldn't you expect that damn fool,

bein's there was no sea to talk 'bout, 'ud run in fur the night? *I* expected he would!"

"Shiverin' Jerusalem!" The mate drew a deep breath.

"*An' he did*, by gravvy! I kept under way easy, th' old plug doin' fine, till I seen the *Lark* fetch up, all standin', then I hears a yell, 'We're ashore.' I cuts the lashin' o' th' light, gits old peg-leg under full headway fur th' woods, unloads m'self, gi' him a kick, an' makes for Archiquette's boat, whar he was waitin'. We pulls away hell-bent-for-destruction.

"What ees?' Frenchie sings out. We're hard aground; where's that vessel whose ridin'-light I saw?' 'No vesselle here 'tall!' I couldn't help snickerin' at Fraser—twas' him talkin'. Then I hears Lizzie's voice an' her ma's squeak. 'I'm so scared, Mr. Fraser!' Curse me, Dick, but I was glad ter hear that he'd got no nigher than *Mister'!* I boots Frenchie. 'Tell him he's in a bad place, that this wind'll chop round t' th' nor-'ard an' he'll go to pieces.' Frenchie ripped it out brave! Swore an' damned in Kanuck—

leastways, I guess that was what he was doin' by the fashion he swung his top-spars round. 'Say,' says Fraser, 'my boats leak, every one of 'em!' They salted you good, thinks I. 'Take us ashore, will you?—I'll give you fifty dollars!' 'W'at your cargo?' axes Frenchie. My hair lifted th' cap from my head, 'cause I'd told him it was vallyble. I pertends to stan' up, falls on th' side o' th' dory, makes a hell of a fuss an' noise. I needn't been shaky 'bout it, 'cause the idjiot sings out, 'This vessel is wuth twenty-five thousand dollars.' That's the fust time I hearn how much he *paid* fur her!"

Burberry roared outright, and the skipper chuckled. Zeke Nelson, smoking an evening pipe on his deck, turned to Matt Wheeler. "They's havin' fun on t' *Lucky* thiss night!"

Not one of the many that smoked and chatted on the vessel noticed a schooner creeping, barely drifting from the nor'ard entrance of Domino Run, under shortened sail. Not until they heard a hoarse voice, "Let go!" and the thrumbling metallic run of chain through a hawse-pipe in

answer did they realize that "some-vun" bound south had come in.

Burberry started at the expression of the skipper's face. "Ye're not took bad—Sam?"

"Who's—who's that come in then?"

The mate stared into the star-darkness, focussing his vision on a long, black shape outside of them, anchored fairly in the channel. He looked for familiar patches in the main-sail—nothing recognizable there; then he studied the spars—nothing that he remembered there.

The creak and whine of sheaves as the unknown lowered sail broke the quiet harshly. "Don't know her, Sam; ain't no Glo'cesterman b' th' condeetion o' her canvas; ain't no—"

"Has she—" Johnson's voice shook—"has she got her starb'rd light higher 'n her port?"

The mate looked long and carefully. "No, sir—Sam, both even. Why?"

"Ha—Ha—Ha!"

Burberry was frightened by his skipper's tones.

Johnson pulled himself together. "Don't mind me, Dick, but it seemed like I'se heard

that voice afore. Seems as if forty-three years gone was here. But thar', Dick, I'm off ballast t'-night, kinder light on m' keel. It's pure malicious ter think that th' *Lark* ever got off'n that bar; I guess m' compass is astray, an' that th' years, forty-three of 'em, seems like yis't'day —when I hearn—"

"What?" The mate waited keenly for the next words, realizing that his skipper was under the control of some powerful agent.

Johnson looked at him strangely. "What, Dick? That voice that I hearn say 'Let go.' An' mind ye he was—"

"Ye're gettin' off'n the story ye was tellin' me, Sam."

"So I be—so I be! Whar was I?"

"Whar Fraser says his vessel's worth twenty-five thousand dollars."

"Twenty-five thous'nd's what he said!" Johnson whispered. Then silence between the two.

From other schooners came laughter and happiness, mingled with the sounds of mouth-organs and fiddles.

The northern lights glowed more frequently, and instead of dropping curtains they enwrapped the heavens with great, sparkling shields that tintillated and changed; now vague, as though seen through vast mists, then standing forth, clear to the eye—one trembling aërial surface of counter-effects. And above it all the climbing moon—almost at its full—shed clear-cold rays of unsympathetic chill, that found their way through the nebulous mass. In this steady gleam the schooners, "jacks," and square-riggers, seemed more huge and gaunt than before. They rode the quiet waters as gigantic black things that are graven on the surface of the north world.

It seemed to both men on the *Lucky's* main-deck that everything in their creation and within their sight was moored forever—as tightly as the cliffs that crowded in on each side, that had been there through time unknown.

"They're all here to-night!" Johnson murmured.

"Ay—but where'll they drop anchor next?"

"Somewheres, Dick, somewheres! Maybe, if

th' wind holds t' th' nor'ard, they'll make Fishin' Ship Harbor."

"Ay, Sam; an' us? Ye'll git under way by daylight?"

"Yes, my mate; but I wants ter finish the story afore I turns in." They settled themselves again, this time on the main-hatch.

"Twenty-five thousand dollars! Th' Kanuck's eyes most popped out. Meantime I could hear Liz an' her ma hollerin' 'bout wantin' to 'git off' an' sich talk, so I whispers to Frenchie ter tell Fraser our dory was too danged small, but we'd take the wimin an' come back fer t' others. They palavered some, then he passes th' word to come 'longside. I hauls my cap hard down, an' the two drops inter her. 'Who's with you?' axes Fraser. 'Friend to me,' says Kanuck. 'Well, you be damned sure to git these ladies 'shore an' put 'em comfortable in your house, 'r I'll break every bone in yer carcasses!'

"I jist had ter leg-go a *haw-haw*. 'What you laffin' at?' says Fraser. 'Sacr-eee,' says I, gruff, bein' 's it was th' only French I knowed."

"By golly—the fun o' it." (Burberry held his sides.)

"'Please, Mister—*you*,' an' Lizzie p'ints at *me*, 'is it far?'

"We was out o' hearin' o' th' *Lark*, but I shakes my head, 's if I didn't understand. 'I wish that Sam' (meanin' *me*, Dick) 'was here! He'd never have risked my life! I'd marry him ter-morrer, I'd be that glad to see him, ma!"

"T' old woman was a-rockin' an' a-prayin' every time a lop sprinkled us. I says then quiet, 'Don't be oneasy, Lizzie, I'm right here!'" Johnson paused, that the other might grasp the dramatic situation.

"If that wouldn't beat anythin' I ever heard-on, christen me a dog-fish!" Burberry cracked the joints of his fingers one by one. "Well—well—well! Ay, to—be—sure ye did—just so! Had 'em on a bad holdin' ground an' breezin' up, so—to—speak! True, too true, an' all fair in love an' fightin', ain't it? My, my—but what'd *she* say?"

The skipper enjoyed his mate's appreciation. "Say? Why she kinder gasped like a cod out

o' water, then she struck her colors an' surrendered. Yes-sirree, surrendered uncondeetional, Dick!"

"An' ye two was spliced?"

"'Ain't I told ye she's m' wife?"

"True—too true, sir—Sam. An' if I beant over-boldlike, what become o' t' others?—an' Fraser especial?"

Johnson's face grew very sombre and thoughtful. "That's whar I lose my bearin's, Dick, fur that night, while th' Sky-Pilot was a-doin' his trick an' givin' us our course fur happiness an' th' like, it *did* blow up dirty f'om th' nor'ard, an' th' *Lark did* go to pieces."

"An' her crew, an' Fraser?" The mate held his breath.

Johnson put his head between his hands. "Don't know, God help me! Three o' their boats—stinkin', clinker-built things I could poke m' finger through, come ashore next mornin', that's all; an' Dick—" he put his hand on the other's knee. Burberry felt it tremble, and placed his on it—"Dick, my mate, th' missus an' me's got it on our souls that Fraser, jest 'cause I

got th' girl I hankered fer, an' put *him* 'shore ter git her, was dr—"

"Ahoy in th' Run! Does anybody here know about doctoring?" The voice rang loud in the gloom and quiet of Domino Run. Mouth-organs, fiddles, every sound was silenced.

Johnson leaped to his feet. Burberry heard him muttering something about "God" and "spells."

"Ahoy, there!—who's singin' out fer a doctor?" The skipper's tones had the old-time ring of command.

"Aboard the *Lark*, just come in from Greenland; got a man—" the voice hesitated—"hurt."

"Ye liar—ye!" Johnson flung this at the astonished mate. "Ye said her lights was even!"

"Swear to God they be, Cap'n!"

"Go ter hell!"

Then, passing his fingers slowly through the masses of iron-gray hair: "Beg yer pardon, Mr. Burberry, but I'm astray, I guess!"

"'Tis all right, Cap'n, *all right*, sir."

"What's yer name?" Johnson gripped the fore-rigging.

"James Fraser. Do you know anything about—" again the hesitation—"wounds?"

"Ay, an' I'll come aboard!" The skipper swayed unsteadily. "He—that's him, Dick, *him*, ye heard him? Thank God fur th' load that's h'isted from th' missus an' me. I'll send a wireless message soon's I get back, so's she'll know too." With a rush Johnson's brain moved. He dashed to the dark fo'castle hatch, shoved it back:

"Stan' by to lower No. 2! Hustle, now, ye lubbers; man hurt on th' *Lark!* I'll take Jack an' To'mie Ellison an' you, mate—"

"Takee me 'long, Capping? Finee flurst stlaight fellee me fixee blandage, allee kind vellee quick help. Me?"

"Git inter yer duds then, Wong. Move lively!"

The cook was first on deck, a roll of cloth under one arm, and an old splint under the other. His pigtail was unbraided, the long, black hair flowed over his shoulders. "Me leadee, Capping—allus leadee."

"What iss wrong with 'un?" Jack Ellison, To'mie at his heels, fastened the last button of his coat.

"Wounded; fell off 'n a spar, I reckon. Now then, git yer burtons on that dory, men! Here, you, Ansen!" The skipper seized the giant Swede. "Go wake up that operator feller, an' *keep* him awake till I sends a message—got that?"

"Yaie, yaie, sor!" By this time the fleet was wild with curiosity.

That Skipper Johnson, of the famous *Lucky*, should call all hands, was enough to stir any sleeper from his bunk. Dories splashed into the water, and the murmur of subdued voices giving orders rose loudly above the gentle *plash-plash* of the tide against timbered sides.

"H'ist for'ard—easy aft—*easy*, I said!" Johnson's voice rumbled above the clatter of the blocks and the *ssssss* of rope sliding through hard hands.

"Shove her out-board! Git an' oar in there! Keep her off th' paint! Lower away! *Hold aft!* Now lower t'gether! So! All in?" The dark forms seated themselves, each with an oar.

"Right, now give way, an' you, Ansen, *git!*"

"Yaie, yaie, sor!"

The dory, under the strength of four oars, slid on fast, Johnson steering. First to port, to shave somebody's chain, then to starboard to avoid a collision with some one else's trap-boat that bobbed on a long line from a taffrail. Other dories stole from the darkness, all making for the *Lark*.

The skipper hauled up for her stern. "In bow—stan' by ter heave a line! Way, 'nough! *In* all!" Wong's oar got the best of him on the command, but he wrestled it into the dory somehow, grabbed his bandages, the splint, and waited.

"Who are you?" (from the *Lark*).

"Ye sung out fer a doctor, I answered ye."

"Come aboard." As Johnson climbed the chain-plates he heard the voice again:

"Keep off, the rest of you!"

"Come on, Wong, wi' yer splicin's, we'll—" A lantern, flashed in his eyes, interrupted the skipper.

"I seem to remember your voice and your

eyes?" The squat, gray-bearded figure held the light close to Johnson's face. "But no!" he whispered; then: "He was lost on the *Susan J.*"

It was all that Johnson could do to restrain himself. "Ye said ye needed a doctor. I ain't much, but I'll do whut I kin. Come aboard, Wong!" The Chink stood beside him, and before Fraser could protest, Burberry, Jack Ellison, and To'mie Ellison were there too. They ranged themselves by their skipper, To'mie watching the stranger carefully.

"Better leave them on deck," he whispered to Johnson, as they all started to follow down the fo'castle ladder. "He," pointing below, "is pretty bad."

"Stay here, men; all 'cept Wong. I'll need him — Mr. Fraser!" The name was spoken almost apologetically.

The fo'castle of the *Lark* was big, with plenty of head-room; clean, and sweet-smelling with the odor of tar and timbers. In a lower bunk on the port side lay a man. The sheen of the swinging lantern showed the swollen, flushed

features harshly. There was not a soul below but the three and Wong.

"Where's yer crew?"

"Gone ashore to stretch their legs," Fraser answered abruptly. Johnson looked steadily at the man in the bunk.

"Where's he hurt?"

"I don't know. He was taken this way about five days ago; complains of terrible pains in his head; has a high fever—"

"But you said he was wounded!" Johnson took the lantern from the other. "Why'd you say that?"

"I wanted to get *somebody* here, and was afraid if I said sickness nobody 'd come."

"H'm!" The skipper pulled back the heavy blankets. The man groaned, tossing his head. Johnson held the light closer. Then he turned slowly.

"Ye've no idea what he's got?"

The other stared back honestly. "None!"

"Well, I'll tell ye. Small-pox! I've seen it afore."

"Great God!" Fraser's face went white, and

he made for the ladder. Johnson pushed Wong out of the way and seized him.

"Don't be a coward, man!"

"*Small-pox!*" the other answered, trying to jerk free. "You're mad to stay there!"

"An' let him die? That's not Sam Johnson's way o' doin' things!"

Fraser ceased struggling. "*You*, Sam Johnson? I thought I knew your eyes. How's Liz —Mrs. Johnson?"

The skipper had not meant to reveal himself so soon, but he went on, gruffly: "Never mind 'bout th' missus now; it's a case o' keepin' this" —jerking his head towards the sick man— "quiet, or you'll have every vessel in here—out, an' a heap o' trouble on yer hands! Now you git me—"

Dan Bearn and his mate had come aboard from their jack while Fraser and Johnson were below, and Dan heard.

"Small-pox, Bill! *'Un's got it!*" They tumbled helter-skelter into their dory and pulled away desperately.

"What's iss hurt wi' un on t' *Lark?*" some-

body asked from the group of dories that lay off, waiting for news.

"Small-pox!" As if by magic every dory got under way at once.

"Small-pox! Small-pox!" The cry echoed and re-echoed in the silent harbor.

This was the sound that interrupted Johnson in the fo'castle of the *Lark*. He bounded up the ladder. "Who told? Who's the fool that told?" He glared at the two Ellisons and Burberry, who stood by the hatch, waiting.

The quiet darkness was illumined then by scores of lanterns that darted to and fro on many decks, and the shuffle of feet came softly. Mingled with these sounds were oaths and curses against the *Lark* and Fraser, for bringing pestilence among them.

A strange, wild scene was Domino Run that night, for every jack, schooner, and square-rigger got up anchor, shoved two and three—in some cases four—dories out on tow, all making for the south'ard entrance. The shouts of hoarse voices, the *strut-strut-strut* of chains

pounding through hawse-pipes, the splash and boilings of oars, the slipping *bang* of capstans, and the grunts of effort as strong arms pulled hard, stirred the faint breeze with waves of sound. Lights everywhere — moving, passing each other, crossing, interlacing. A very panorama of excitement and fear.

And over it all the sinking moon shone strongly from just above the line of cliffs. Some one, who was not afraid, was playing a mouth-organ, and as the tune rose above the noises Johnson's glare changed to a longing expression. Burberry and the other two went close to him.

"That's right men. There's no place like home! Now, you heard! There's 'pox' aboard, an' ye kin go if ye like."

Without an instant's hesitation Jack Ellison, huge as ever in the faint light, spoke up. "Cap'n Johnzon, me an' To'mie donna leave ye till ye zayz zo!"

"You know me, sir!" Burberry muttered.

"Wong stlay too, Capping, please?"

"I wish men loved me as yours do, Sam."

The wistful words touched a chord in the skipper's heart. He wrung Fraser's hand long.

"I'm gettin' old—Jim, an' Liz—she's th' same, but the two's of us be so glad ter know ye didn't drown that night in Chedabucto Bay; leastways *I'm* glad, an' she'll be too, when she gits th' message I'm goin' ter send."

"I got ashore on my main-topmast, and hearing you and—and she were married, went to Greenland; been there ever since. It was like a dream when you answered my hail. I *knew* your voice, Sam—but I read in an old paper that you'd been lost on the *Susan J.*"

"So I would 'a' if it hadn't been fer Jack here, an' his wife, Kyrie—bless her!"

"'Twass nowt, Cap'n!" The great Labradorian was embarrassed.

"Here—avast! We mus' see to that feller below!" Johnson got such rough remedies as Fraser's medicine-chest had; and he sent Wong to the *Lucky* for turpentine.

All through the night they nursed the man, Johnson bathing his head, Fraser putting oil on his body. At dawn, just at the hour when

the stars fade and reflected sunlight grows over the skies, Johnson faltered in his work.

"You're tired, Sam?"

"Comee on d'leck, Capping?" The tall figure strode up the ladder, went for'ard to the bitts.

"*Lucky*—ahoy!"

"Yaie, yaie, sor!" He had not noticed the dory that came over the waters.

"Th' *Strathcona* 'll be in here soon, Jim, we passed her at the Dumplin's; they'll look after —him. I cain't, bein' old an' weak in m' timbers."

Jack Ellison, standing gray and grim beside the man he loved, saw that something was wrong. "Bessis go t' de *Lucky*, Cap'n?"

Johnson looked round.

Domino Run was deserted, save for the *Lark* and the *Lucky*. To the east'ard a glowing rim of orange peeped over the hills.

Sunrise, and all silent.

Long pennons of cloud moved slowly athwart the face of the sun, and were thrown into silhouettes, jagged, distorted, and strange.

"This ain't th' old *Lark*, Jim?"

"No, Sam; it's *Lark No. 2*."

Johnson's eyes travelled through space. They reached far beyond the confines of Domino Run; they saw the wharves at Gloucester, saw the image of a little cottage back in the town.

"Burberry—Dick?"

"Here, sir."

"Take me to my ship—*my ship*, an' git under way fur home! Ye hear?" With a show of sternness Johnson clambered into the dory that Ansen had come in.

"Jim—ye don't hold no grudge—eh? Ye don't?"

In answer Fraser dropped over the *Lark's* side, and the two shook hands solemnly. "I would have done the same and worse, Sam—for Lizzie!"

Wong's narrow aloe eyes were fixed on Johnson's face. "Pullee—pullee—dammee hard!" he whispered to the Ellisons.

"I got ya a message fur you, Captain!" Ansen drew the envelope from his shirt.

"Wait t'll I gits on my own deck!"

The crew of the *Lucky* were waiting as the dory pulled alongside.

Leave Sam Johnson? Never, for he had never left *them* in times of danger, when seas ran high and viciously; when every other fisherman took a course for some port, Sam Johnson "held on" for his "boys," and they worshipped him in consequence.

The skipper got aft, by the binnacle, all hands grouped about him, Fraser and Jack Ellison at his side.

"Git sail on her, men!"

"There's no wind now, sir," Burberry whispered.

"No wind? Well, git up yer anchor an' we'll drift towards home till th' breeze do come."

Johnson paused, then turned to Fraser. "What 'll I say fur you t' th' missus, Jim?"

The other hesitated.

"Come, come, speak up!"

"Tell her Jim Fraser is glad that she married the bravest man in the world, and—" Fraser's voice broke slightly—"tell her that I love her

as I always did, that the years passed are but minutes to me; and, Sam—"

"Ay?"

"Say that I'm coming to see her. We're all old and gray, but memories, Sam, they never grow gray, do they?"

"No, Jim, they don't! Burberry, git me a pencil an' paper t' send a message that I'm adrift fer home."

"Da message, sor?" Ansen held out the envelope.

"Belay there, man, cain't you see I'm busy? I knows what that says; it's a congrateelation on m' birthday, that's to-day. Liz never 's missed *one!*" The mate brought a pad.

"Let's see which way ter take a course." Johnson wetted the pencil-point. "I knows!

"*Mrs. Samuel Johnson,*
"*Gloucester, Massachusetts.*

"Jim is afloat: Sends love. I am adrift for home. SAM."

"That's ten words, ain't it? An' tells all. *Git*, Ansen, wi' this!"

The Swede pulled away, the blades of his oars shining in the early sunlight.

"Now I'll read my congrateelations!" Johnson tore open the envelope, spread out the thin sheet. He read it twice, spelling each word, to be *sure*.

"Lizzie died yesterday, asking for you and Jim. When will you be home? WILLIS."

Jack Ellison held him; they all tried to help. The old skipper freed himself, walked steadily to the wheel, a grim, set look in his eyes.

"How's she headin'?" He peered into the binnacle. "Ha! East'b'so'! Hold her to it!"

"Hold her to it 'tis!" Burberry answered, tears streaming over his gaunt face.

"Boys, Jim, God bless ye all, an' you, Jack Ellison. Take care o' my ship—fur me. I'm—I'm adrift."

The grand eyes closed, the gray head fell forward, but the worn hands gripped the spokes of the *Lucky's* wheel as of old.

THE END

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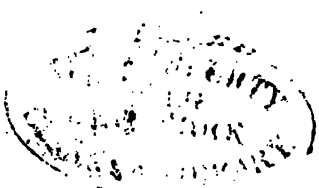

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